RETROACTION

ISSUE FOUR SUMMER 2010

ARMALYTE

PSYTRONIK SOFTWARE'S REMAKE LEADS THE WAY AS WE BLAST OFF WITH OUR FINAL GAMES REVIEWS. PLUS KENZ FROM PSYTRONIK JOINS US FOR A CHAT

KILLER APP: STRIDER

WHY CAPCOM'S MEGA DRIVE PORT OF THE ARCADE HIT IS HAILED AS A KILLER APP ON THE 16-BIT CONSOLE

ZAKU

WE REVIEW THE NEW ATARI LYNX GAME. PLUS SUPER FIGHTER TEAM'S BRANDON COBB AND ZAKU'S DESIGNER, OSMAN CELIMLI, TALK ABOUT THE GAME'S DEVELOPMENT

All good things...

There's no disguising the fact that it's been a long time since issue three... a huge amount of time has passed, actually. The sad news is that this is the last issue of *Retroaction*—certainly, we need to take a break, at the least. Times have hit the staff badly and the remaining skeleton crew have limped across the finishing line. It's been a long struggle I can tell you, and one, which has taken its toll on all involved.

What happened? Well, the main problem can be traced back to the magazine's roots, back to 2008 when I had a plan to produce a quarterly retrogaming magazine, full of great articles and content. Not only that, but the magazine would be produced in PDF with a degree of interactivity never seen before: hyperlinks, anchor links, bookmarks and more. This unique interactivity was complemented by high production values. Alas, the high standard we set for the content and design could not be maintained and timescales began slipping.

The decision to end *Retroaction* hasn't been a knee jerk reaction either as we've been dwelling over the future of the magazine for over eight months. Indeed, issue four was on the brink of not being published at all, but there is so much good stuff in here that it would be a shame—a crime, in fact—for it not to see the light of day.

In this issue we have three great interviews: Kenz from Psytronik was only too happy to discuss his software publishing company, Out-of-Print Archive talked about their classic videogaming magazine preservation project and Super Fighter Team discussed their new Lynx game, *Zaku*, as well as their publishing company. We also have reviews of the finest independant retro games around: the PC remake of *Armalyte* and the new Atari Lynx game, *Zaku*. Elsewhere, *Strider* is given the Killer App treatment, *Raid on Bungeling Bay* is Retro Respected, ZX Spin gets Emulator Profiled and more.

While it may be the end of *Retroaction* magazine, it isn't quite the end of *Retroaction*. The website continues to keep readers up to date on all the latest news in the world of retrogaming, from new game releases, ezines, podcasts, magazines, remakes, commercial remakes and much more. That's not where the website ends though as we plan to use the website as a home to *Retroaction* Extra, a place where we can post our articles: 'Retro Respects', 'Raiders of the Lost Arcades', 'Emulator Profile', 'How to Cause A Complete Controversy' and more.

We're completely open to contributing authors, too, so, if you would like to contribute a homebrew review, article or feature then just let us know. A few regular users use the forum to post news about new homebrew games, which I have been eternally grateful for (thanks guys), but feel free to sign up for the main website to post your news on the front page as well.

The magazine's future may be uncertain at this time, but together we can develop the website into a retro hub for news, reviews, articles, interviews and more. This isn't the end. This is just the beginning of the next chapter.

RETROACTION

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"We've had to endure much, you and I, but soon there will be order again. A new age. Aquinas spoke of the mythical city on the hill, soon that city will be a reality and we will be crowned its kings. Or better than kings... gods!"

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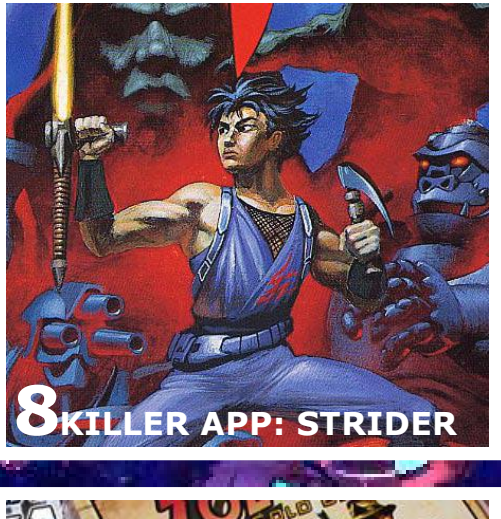
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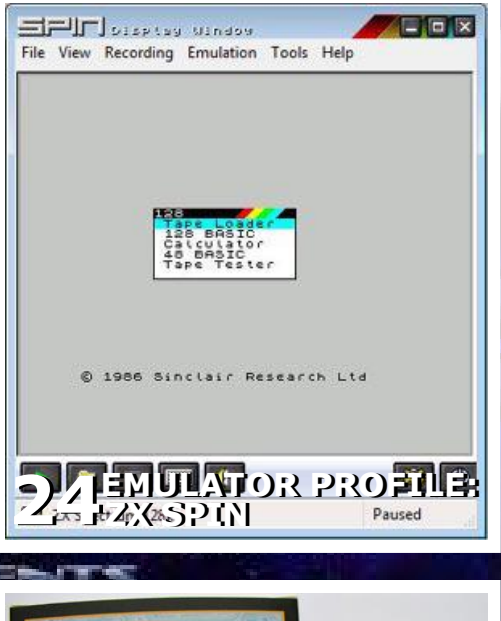

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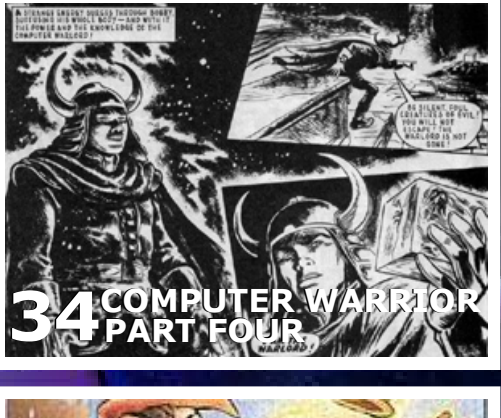
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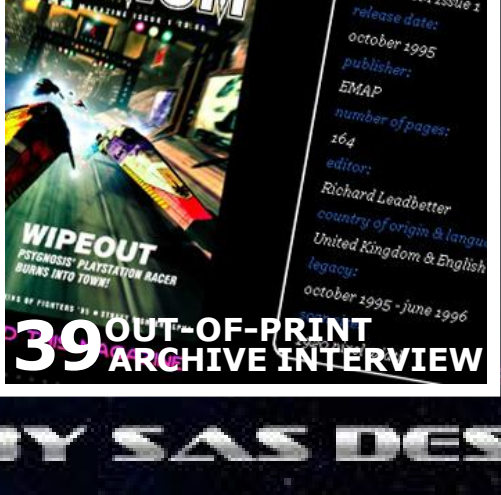

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SYTRONIK PRESENTS ARMALYTE BY SAS DESI

RETRO SCENE News from the world of retrogaming

Nreive interviewed in Commodore Free

Retroaction's very own Editor/ Designer, Neil Reive, was interviewed for issue 35 of *Commodore Free.* The interview was pretty indepth and includes such topics as *Retroaction* (of course), what is retro?, emulation and more. The issue also has the usual Commodore content, news and features. Available to download in PDF, HTML, SEQ, Text and .DSK (C64 disk image). Go check it out.

www.commodorefree.com/

MSXdev'09 WINNER!
So you thought Dr. Pill wasn't going to win the MSXdev'09? Just leave me alone, what you need is a psychiatrist, you crazy fool!

The **MSXDev'09** gaming development competition came to a close and the winners were announced. *Dr. Pill* from Infinite was the big winner, coming away with first place after gaining an 83.3% score. *Dr. Pill* also achieved the following category awards: "Game with Best Graphics" (shared with Retaliot), "Best Music" and "Most Original Game". *Menace* from TNI finished as runners up and achieved the "Game with Better Gameplay" award. *British Bob* from RELEVO Videogames came fourth and picked up the "Most Polished Game" award. As mentioned, *Retaliot* from Video Hazard shared the "Game with Best Graphics" with *Dr. Pill*. A full rundown of the winners along with in-depth scores and game downloads can be found on the MSXDev website.

Andrew Rollings has kindly released a **free PDF version of his book The ZX Spectrum Book – 1982 to 199x**. The book, which covers over two hundred of the finest ZX Spectrum games, was previously published at www.hiivebooks.com/ with a limited hardback release and promptly sold out. The PDF comes in at 33MB and can be found at the World of Spectrum website. Enjoy.

Due to popular demand among some of the Amiga forums around the net, and to help revive interest in the Amiga retro gaming scene, Underground Arcade decided to host an **Amiga Game-Making competition**. All the games were uploaded to the competition server and are ready to download in LHA or ADF format, complete with read me files or instructions. Remember that these games are unfinished. Entries for this first (of many, we hope) Amiga Game-making Competition included *X-Mas Disaster*, *Cornelius Saves Christmas*, *Santa Montana*, *Dwarves in the Iceland*, *X-Mas Syman*, *X-Mas Glass Ball Factory*, *Sam and Max*.

Big news at Out-of-Print Archive, as the first **official release of videogming magazine back catalogue** is announced with the second issue of ***Mega Drive Advanced Gaming***, a fantastic underrated magazine of its time. Check out the MAG2 page over at OoPA for the content highlights,

issue details and download link.

Not only did Out-of-Print Archive receive permission to work on all **Hugh Gollner**'s back catalogue of videogaming magazines but they got an exclusive interview with the man himself.

Support magazine preservation projects, not eBay scammers.

Have you noticed that magazine scan DVD sellers seem to be breeding on eBay? We have and are really getting sick of it all. These magazines remain copyrighted to the original publisher, whether they are still around or not, and they are definitely not "public domain" as one seller has laughably stated. The real kick here is that these scans are not even the work of these sellers and the majority of them were done by Mort at his own website at Zzap Zzuperstore and can also be found hosted around various magazine preservation websites for free. So with the only cost being the blank DVDs, these sellers are making between £5.00 and even up to £30.00 profit on each auction.

RETROSCENE

Well, we think enough is enough and it's time to hit back. Remember, these people have no permission to sell these scans and don't even have permission from the person who scanned them. We've already reported hundreds of auctions from many different sellers, however, we all know that this is just the start. eBay may ignore this as a one off and just warn the seller, so this is where you come in. If you were a huge fan of these magazines then you owe it to yourself to report these copyrighted infringing auctions, again and again. Together, we can all make a difference.

To make reporting the auctions that little bit easier I have included their user ids, links to their auctions and example reporting descriptions.

Report Item -> Counterfeit and breaches copyright -> Bootleg and counterfeit media -> Media on Recordable formats (CD-R, DVD-R, VHS tape, etc.)

And in the brief description section write something along the lines of: "Copyright infringement of video game magazines without the publishers authorization"

To make it a bit easier you can report in a batch of ten at a time by using the auction ref numbers.

At the beginning of the year we

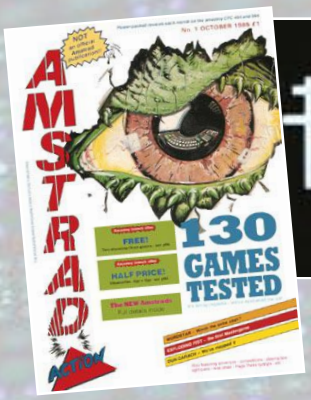
reported that The New Dimension were hosting a **Sideways SEUCK (Shoot-'em-up Construction kit) game making competition** for the Commodore 64 platform. The games were produced and entered by various SEUCK specialists. The judges made their comments and the results have now been announced. Taking first place is *Pour Le Merite* (*For Merit*) from Bamse. Taking the runner up spot is The Rocket Man developed by Sea Software. In third place (second runner up) was *Syphwyrm* from author Anthony Burns. Fourth place was taken by *Barney*, developed by WEC/Cosine. In fifth place was *Tau Zeta* from Alf Yngve. For the full rundown of the results, entries and downloads, visit the New Dimension SEUCK compo page.

Out-of-Print Archive announced **another exclusive "official" magazine scan release**. This release of ***Raze*** issue 1 from October 1990 was scanned by none other than Mort and edited by the OoPA team with full permission from the publisher. *Raze* was a short lived multi-format title from Newsfield Publications (publishers of *Zzap!64* and *Crash*) and covered the 16-bit computers and emerging gaming consoles. Check out the *Raze* page at OoPA.

Not only have Out-of-Print Archive received full permission to work on all past Newsfield Publication magazines, but they also managed to get an **interview with Roger Kean**, the Publisher/ Managing Director at Newsfield. And an excellent interview it is as well, if I may say so myself.

It's ten years since ***Deus Ex*** was released in North America (the game celebrates its 10th anniversary in Europe later this year) and the innovative first person shooter, which fused together elements of action, adventure, RPG and more remains a classic game as ever. It is certainly one of my all time favourite games and the last great game I ever played, and with its ten year old status, officially turns retro, in the eyes of *Retroaction*. If you love *Deus Ex* as much as I do—as well as millions across the globe—then check out Rock Paper Shotgun's extensive coverage of the game.

To celebrate **Future Publishing's 25th anniversary**, Out-of-Print Archive traced the birth and rise of one of the world's



most famous and successful magazine publishing companies. Future Publishing will always have a place in my heart, mainly due to my first ever computing magazine being *Amstrad Action* and one of my all time favourite magazines, *MEGA*, both being published by Future. Some time ago, I managed to track down many of the early Future Publishing staff (including founder Chris Anderson and former Editor/Publisher/Group Publisher Steve Carey) and got some great history of the company, some of which you can read in the article. Weblink: Retro Future – Celebrating 25 Years of Future Publishing

Another plug for a fabulous article presented by our very own editor: '**Back in Time**'. 'Back in Time' is a monthly feature where we look back at the classic video gaming magazines twenty years ago this month. 1990 was a very special time in retrogaming, what with the 16-bit computers takingover the 8-bit computers and the emergence of the 16-bit consoles. 'Back In Time' looks at all the magazine happenings at the time, including a handful of online material to read, selected from the various magazines.

Games release list

It's been a while since our last issue, so here's a selection of some of the games released in the past eight months...

Realms of Quest III (VIC-20)
Weblink: www.psytronik.com

The Wild Bunch (C64)
gamesplaygames.co.uk/thewildbunch/

Manic Miner in the Lost Levels (DS). Well, this is a fascinating development. Stuart Campbell (fantastic journalist and fellow Scot) wrote an article on the lost levels of Manic Miner in Retro Gamer issue 63, featuring never before seen screens from various home computer versions, and this is picked up on by some ingenious developers who decided to port all these "lost levels", and more, onto the DS. What's more is that you can download the Manic Miner in the Lost Levels' DS ROM for free.
Weblink: headsoft.com.au

Miner 2049er Again (Windows)
Weblink: acoders.com

COBEX (*Cruising on Broadway Extra*)
Weblink: www.tcksoft.co.uk

Subacautic (ZX Spectrum 128).
Weblink: www.mojontwins.com

Retroworks have released ***King's Valley*** on the ZX Spectrum. A conversion of the 1985 Konami title, the game has the player controlling a delightful little character called Vick in his search for the Mystery Jewels while

avoiding the mummies. The game card, map, cover art and download can be found at the Retroworks' website pages.
Weblink: retroworks.es/index_en.php

***Bezerk* remake**
Download link: ippa.se/berzerk.exe

All Present and Correct (Spectrum)
Weblink: www.bobs-stuff.co.uk

Sgt. Helmet Zero is a no frills rescue mission: move in, kill anything that looks at you the wrong way and find the prisoners. The game also takes advantage of the Spectrum 128k's modified ULA. Full details, instructions and download can be found at The Mojon Twins' website...
Weblink: www.mojontwins.com

A team of crack coders—Fano, BBC-Iron and MacDeath—have **re-released *Rick Dangerous*** on the Amstrad CPC128+, making use of the extra memory that the PLUS hardware offers. More details and a DSK download can be found at the *Rick Dangerous 128+* pages at the CPC Wiki.
weblink: cpcwiki.eu/index.php/

Miles Mad Mission (Spectrum)
Download basic pack
Download extended pack

Uwol, Quest For Money (Spectrum). Weblink: www.mojontwins.com

Box Reloaded (Spectrum)
Weblink: elbeyker.blogspot.com

Cobra Mission (C64).
Weblink: noname.c64.org

Sgt. Helmet Zero (DS)
First time coder, IceVAN, has developed a DS version of The Mojon Twins' Spectrum game Sgt. Helmet Zero. Now you can carry out daring rescue missions on the... move with your DS. The game looks fab, so why not download it—it is free as well, with only a quick registration required.
Weblink: nds.scenebeta.com

Lala Prologue (Spectrum)
Weblink: www.mojontwins.com/

Orion Prime (Amstrad CPC)
Weblink: op.cpcscene.com

Invasion of the Zombie Monsters (Spectrum, MSX).
Originally presented at the RetroMadrid fair by Relevo Videogames was a new game for MSX and ZX Spectrum called Invasion of the Zombie Monsters. This B-Movie style title is a great looking arcade shooter that is available to purchase in physical form from Matranet and also available to in download emulator format.
Weblink: www.relevovideogames.com/

Uwol – Quest For Money (Mega Drive). Weblink: shiru.untergrund.net

Kyd Cadet (Spectrum)
Download link

Dead on Time, a fantastic looking Amstrad CPC shoot-'em-up from the makers of *Star Sabre*, has now been

released on tape courtesy of Psytronik. Full details of the game can be found at the Dead on Time page at Psytronik.

Adventures In Time (Plus/4)
Weblink: plus4world.powweb.com

Superfly DX (Atari Jaguar).
Weblink: dbug.kicks-ass.net

"The original ***Knight Lore*** is considered by many as a true classic game..." the game was updated with a version for the MSX2 (released last year and was reviewed in issue 3 of Retroaction), we now have an **updated remake for the PC**.
Weblink: retrospec.sgn.net/game/kl

Color Lines (Amstrad CPC)
Weblink: tj.gpa.free.fr

Donkey Kong remake (PC)
Weblink: retroremakes.com/forum/

Robotz DX remake (PC)
Robotz DX is an updated PC remake/re-imagining of an Atari ST game called *Robotz*. Developed by James at RGCD, *Robotz DX* keeps the gameplay firmly in classic territory, what with *Alien Breed/ Gauntlet* style dungeons gameplay action. The game is freely available to download, but a boxed copy can be obtained from the website for a small fee.
Weblink: rgcd.co.uk/robotzdx/

Sir Ababol (ZX Spectrum)
Weblink: www.mojontwins.com

Space Invaders remake (PC)
Weblink: news.retroremakes.com

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A stunning arcade-adventure for the Commodore 64

retro GAMER SIZZLER 94%

micro mart 9/10

• Over 200 screens to explore • Multiple weapons & armour • Special power-ups
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LEAD ON ADVENTURER, YOUR QUEST AWAITS!

64

PSYTRONIK SOFTWARE

KILLER APP:

ストライダー飛竜

TM

Words & screenshots by Duffman

DETAILS

Developer: Capcom
Publisher: Sega
Released: 1989
Platform: Sega Mega Drive
Genre: Beat-'em-up

In 1990 I was perfectly happy with my little beige Commodore 64 and its multitude of 8-bit games, but one trip into to a local computer game shop changed that. This computer game shop (home computers being the dominant UK gaming platform at the time) had a certain sleek black console called a Mega Drive on display. Import video gaming was just emerging as a big thing in the UK, and this Japanese import machine was playing a copy of a fantastic looking game called

Strider. This was unlike anything I had seen or heard before, although I had read some of the rave reviews the game was receiving in the gaming magazines. So having just come into some money, I was able to purchase a "modified" official UK Mega Drive (which could play import games) and a copy of a Japanese import *Strider*.

After stumbling home with said modified Mega Drive and Japanese import copy of *Strider*, I quickly set everything up, inserted the game cartridge, patiently waited a few more seconds (for the SEGA logo to appear) and pressed start. As the game begins, an evil sadistic laugh is heard from a character as he ascends the screen, clutching the Earth, before disappearing at the top. The game's hero then glides onto the top of what appears to be the Kremlin. Sirens start blaring away, KGB-type soldiers, wielding knife-edge assault rifles, close in on your character, and the soundtrack kicks in. That's the moment that I knew I was playing something truly amazing. While the C64 was a great machine with good hardware capabilities and excellent games, the Mega Drive was a dedicated games machine capable of achieving arcade quality graphics, sound and gameplay. My gaming world would never be the same again.

...and the soundtrack kicks in. That's the moment that I knew I was playing something truly amazing.

So after reading up on the game, the plot was revealed: Grand Master Meio has invaded Earth with the help of his robotic army of warriors, leaving mayhem and destruction in his path. The world is on the brink of collapse. Faraway, a band of warriors, known as Striders, send one of their best men, Hiryu, to face the armies of Meio in an attempt to rid the evil from Earth.

Hiryu starts the game with three lives, but this can be changed to four or five if you wish. A gauge shows three blocks and every time Hiryu is hit, a block disappears. If all the blocks in the guage disappear, a life is lost. Points are gained by slicing and dicing enemies with your sword (called a Falchion). Strider Hiryu can run, jump, flip, slide, swing on ledges, hang onto scaffolding and gantries to flip himself up onto higher platforms and even climb up walls.

By slashing open item containers, extras can be found in the form of robots, points and extra lives. There are three robots in the game: The Dipodal Saucer, The Terapodal Robo-Panther and The Hawk Robot. The Dipodal Saucer fires a laser every time you swing your Falchion. When you move, the saucer moves with you, taking out any enemy in its path. Obtaining a saucer turns one Hiryu's life gauge blocks from green to red. If that red block is lost, by getting hit, the saucer disappears. The Terapodal Robo-Panther can be obtained when two of the blocks Hiryu's life gauge are red. When the Panther appears, the red blocks turn yellow. The Panther leaps and bounds around the screen, before turning into two saucers. The Hawk Robot flies around at the top of the screen, destroying any enemies, before disappearing. Item containers

Catching a lift with Urobolos

Hiryu is a true expert in gymnastics and can perform some fine moves

One of the more agile opponents encountered in the game, complete with jetpack

may also provide other useful power ups like life gauge increases, limited invincibility and an increase in the size of the Falchion.

The game itself is staged like an epic film, quickly moving from one set piece to the other, from one location to another, all carried out to appropriate rousing incidental soundtracks. Along the way, Hiryu will fight the enemy in Russia, Siberia and the Amazon, and face memorable guardians. Hiryu doesn't just fight against the typical end-of-level baddies—he has to also face off against bosses in the beginning and mide-points of each level. The first real guardian encountered is Urobolos, who appears when a group of Russian delegates leap from their chairs to form the frightful caterpillar type robot creature. The locations and set pieces also play an important part in providing that great cinematic atmosphere to *Strider*, from the Russian wastelands, to Siberia and the antigravity section of the Ballog character's airship.

When *Strider* first came out, it was regarded as the "killer app" for the Mega Drive, providing some awesome graphics, a film quality soundtrack and superb gameplay. All the fantastic graphical effects from the arcade, such as the black out in the power station on level two, are present. The Hiryu sprite is big, detailed and moves well,

and the backdrops are simply wonderful, with some gorgeous parallax scrolling. The small amount of sprite glitch—an occasional flicker of the main Hiryu character—is the only negative throughout, and even that doesn't detract from the overall quality of the game. The game is very addictive, with fast paced action scenes—the unforgettable "running down the hill" sequence will get the heart pumping—rounded off with sleek, professional level design.

There are some sensational sound effects and a menacing main soundtrack throughout which, blended together seamlessly, produce an incredibly atmospheric experience. With soundtrack titles such as "Raid!", "Siberian Tunnel", "Big Run", "Gravity Unusual" and "Roaring" the programmers have produced tunes with a distinctive FM synthesised sound that sound great played on their own (yes, I've listened to them on many occasions through the options menu).

Naturally, the Japanese NTSC version of the game runs at 60hz, rather than the European PAL speed of 50hz, and provides a much faster paced game. One other minor difference with the Japanese version is that Hiryu gives out a "puh" grunt when he swings his Falchion. Yes, the cut-scenes are near impossible to follow—unless you're fluent in Japanese—but the rest of the game is in English. Moving on to play the PAL version is quite a chore as it moves noticeably slower than the NTSC version. The saving grace for the PAL version is that the player has three chances to continue where they die off, which the Japanese NTSC version doesn't offer. In retrospect, the North American NTSC version is the best of both worlds, what with having the 60hz speed of the Japanese version, along with the English language cut-scenes.

The early nineties truly were the golden days of gaming, what with the emergence of the consoles and their arcade quality games. If you're after some 16-bit nostalgia or just want to play a game which is a classic in every way, then hunt out an NTSC copy of *Strider*.

The game is very addictive, with fast paced action scenes rounded off with sleek, professional level design.

ARMALYTE

Words & screenshots by **Neil Reive**

All right, I need to get this out of the way right now. I've never played the original *Armalyte*. Now that's off my chest I can carry on. I haven't shouted loud about shoot-'em-ups in the past, despite doing nothing but playing the likes of *Salamander* and *Nemesis* in the arcades during the 1980s. That's going back a bit and they may have been two player affairs, but I still have a fondness for a good old classic shoot-'em-up.

If you were lucky enough to have owned a Commodore 64 then you may have came across a rather spiffing shoot-'em-up from Thalamus Ltd. That shmup was *Armalyte* and was heralded as one of the best games of its type on the C64 and with praise from the likes of *Zzap!64*'s Gordon Houghton, *Commodore User*'s Steve Jarratt and *Computer and Video Games*' Julian Rignall. Need I say more?

But just what is this *Armalyte* all about? Well, on paper, it looks like any other standard left to right scrolling space shoot-'em-up. Due to an alien invasion, you, and a possible second player, take a spaceship through a long narrow level full of enemy ships, mini-bosses and a final end-of-level guardian, all in an attempt to reclaim your outposts. Complete the level and it's onto the next one.

Normally, having moved on to RPG and strategy games over the years, I would stay clear of shoot-'em-ups, but for some reason I volunteered to take this game on and, I must say, I fell in love with the genre all over again. The game absolutely oozes quality from every pore.

If you're a fan of the original

For some reason I volunteered to take this game on and, I must say, I fell in love with the genre all over again

an absolutely fantastic game wrapped up in an unbelievable packaged box of delights

and have mixed feelings about this remake then fear not, as the programming team have developed the game so that it is configurable to your every desire. Don't want the new soundtrack playing throughout? Just switch it off. Don't like the new techno upgrade announcements? Turn it off. Want the game full screen or windowed? No problem. Virtually everything in *Armalyte* is configurable.

Some people may complete the game or get bored of playing the game as it is, so how about a fantastic achievements and bonuses scheme? If you check out *Armalyte*'s options you will come across the Achievements screen. Here you will find targets like Complete Level 1, 2, 3, etc. Destroy 1000x enemy ships, 10x bosses, etc. Apparently, there is a surprise if all the targets are achieved, but seeing as I'm pretty rubbish (I'm out of practice with shoot-'em-ups—well, that's my excuse) I can't confirm or deny this.

Special mention must go out to the SAS programming team. Stuart Collier (programmer) has done excellent work with the gameplay: things flow smoothly throughout and there are no bugs to speak of. Trevor 'Smila' Storey (graphics and design) has worked his magic on the visuals. The game looks amazing with some truly silky aesthetic work as Smila has retrofitted and updated every visual in the game. Smila also produced the fine looking cover art to accompany the game. To round off things perfectly, Chris 'Infamous' Bailey has produced some fantastic sound effects and tunes for the remake.

Being published by Psytronik you can expect the usual professional packaging. According to the publishers, the game comes in a stylish DVD case, along with the full C64 Competition Edition of Armalyte (in emulator compatible .D64 format), a brand new one hour special "One Man & His Mic – Psytronik Software Special" podcast, a brand new PC "remix-e-load" demo, an Armalyte Jukebox music demo, special artwork "making of.." presentation, Psytronik Software promo videos and more.

Really, this is an absolutely fantastic game wrapped up in an unbelievable packaged box of delights. If you're either a fan of the original, a shoot-'em-up fan or just a retro gamer at heart, then you should really check it out. You won't regret it.

DETAILS

Developer:	SAS Designs
Publisher:	Psytronik
Platform:	PC
Weblink:	www.psytronik.net
Genre:	Shoot-'em-up

RATINGS

Graphics:	90%
Sound:	87%
Gameplay:	92%
Overall:	**92%**

PSYTRONIK SOFTWARE

An interview with Jason 'Kenz' Mackenzie

We've always been very supportive of the homebrew retro scene, and after playing the likes of Armalyte, Sub Hunter and Knight 'n' Grail, we decided to find out more about Psytronik, the publisher of these fine games

PSYTRONIK SOFTWARE: JASON 'KENZ' MACKENZIE

"Binary Zone quickly grew to become the leading UK supplier of C64 PD software and I ended up with over 4000 members from around 20 different countries."

Retroaction: Can you please introduce yourself and tell us how you got into retrogaming?
Kenz: Greetings Programs! My name is Jason 'Kenz' Mackenzie and I've been into retro gaming before gaming even became retro! It all started for me many aeons ago with a Sinclair ZX81, I then moved onto a Speccy, Amstrad CPC, Commodore 64, Amiga 500 and Amiga 1200—I then decided the Commodore 64 was the best of the bunch and have supported that system ever since. There are a few other computers lurking around here as well (Commodore Plus/4, Acorn Electron—and I even recently discovered the delights of the VIC-20).

R: Before we discuss Psytronik, I'd like to go into the various retro goings on that you've been involved with over the years. Binary Zone is something many people will have heard over the years. Can you tell us a little bit about Binary Zone and how it came to be?

K: Well, back in 1988/1989 I used to buy PD software from 'Wicked PD' which was a PD library run by Compunet duo Ian and Mic. I loved receiving their demo disks through the post and I even typeset some of their PD catalogues for them using the Mac at the place I used to work. Anyway, Ian & Mic eventually decided to close Wicked PD in order to concentrate on writing games. By this time I had amassed quite a few contacts who I swapped demos with and had built up quite a big collection of demos and PD games myself. I decided to set up my own PD library to carry on where Wicked PD left off and so Binary Zone PD was born. I slapped an advert in *Commodore User* and it all went a bit bonkers! Binary Zone quickly grew to become the leading UK supplier of C64 PD software and I ended up with over 4000 members from around 20 different countries.

R: You have also been involved with Cosine. For the benefit of our readers, can you give a little more detail on the group and your involvement with it?
K: Cosine is a still-active demo crew that produces demos and games for various retro-computers to this very day. You can find out more about the Cosine members and releases on their website (www.cosine.org.uk) ... I was invited to join Cosine back in the 90's by Jason 'TMR' Kelk and did a few bits and bobs for demos (a few graphics and lots of scroll-text waffle if memory serves). Before being in Cosine I was in a group called Computer World (named after the Kraftwerk track) with some of my chums from school and then I joined the UK demo group Xentrix. After that Binary Zone took up all my time and then years later I joined Cosine on a largely inactive basis.

R: During the mid/late nineties, you produced a fantastic looking zine called *Commodore Zone*. Can you tell us more about this publication?
K: At that time most of the "off the shelf" C64 magazines had either died or were in serious decline so I decided to release a "replacement" magazine with the help of various friends and contacts. I was very lucky to have some great writers on board including Jason "TMR" Kelk who was the editor of the magazine for the first six issues before handing me the reins for issue seven onwards—although he remained on board as Executive Editor for all the remaining issues (he now writes the Homebrew pages for *Retro Gamer* magazine don't ya know). Other *Commodore Zone* writers included Andy Roberts (one-time member of Apex Computer Productions and regular *Commodore Format* writer), Andrew Fisher (*Commodore Force* / *Retro Gamer* writer), Warren Pilkington (*Zzap! 64* Tips contributor),

PSYTRONIK SOFTWARE: JASON 'KENZ' MACKENZIE

Alf Yngve (SEUCK legend), Jon Wells (C64 coding hero responsible for many *CZone* covermount treats) and not forgetting Ferris, the *CZone* mascot! The magazine was released in A5 booklet form which made it easier to post than a bulky A4 mag. To keep costs down the pages of each issue were in black & white so the mag could easily be photocopied in bulk. Each issue was presented with a coloured-card cover that was hand-laminated using that clear covering film (I still have nightmares about covering all those mags in that darned stuff). The mag lasted for 16 issues in total and the final issue contained a massive 76 pages and sported a professionally printed full-colour cover featuring the TV presenting-babe Emily Booth from 'Bits'! A highlight of each issue was the celebrity interviews. Over the 16 issues, we interviewed many 8-bit heroes including Ben Dalglish, Rob Hubbard, Simon (*Mega Apocalypse*) Nicol, Manfred (*Turrican*) Trenz, Martin Galway, Dave 'Ubik' Korn and Tim 'Miserable Bugger' Follin amongst others.

Although the magazine is no longer produced you can buy scanned versions of all the issues on the Commodore Zone 10th Anniversary CD-ROM which is available in the BZ Retro Store (www.binaryzone.org/retrostore/).

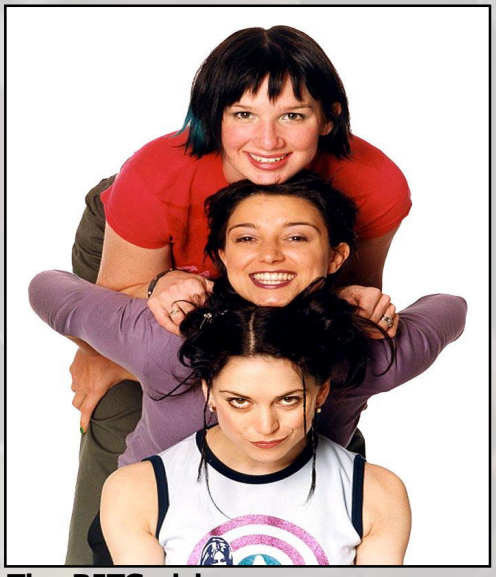
And talking of *Commodore Zone*, one thing I'm planning to do at some point in the future is to re-publish all the issues in the form of two books. *Commodore Zone* Volume 1 will contain issues 1-8 and Volume 2 will contain issues 9-16. Each issue will be completely re-typeset as some of the early issues looked a wee bit ropey due to the very limited facilities we had access to at the time. I haven't actually announced this anywhere so this is a little bit of exclusive info for your mag. It's going to take me a loooong time to redo all the issues of the mag so don't hold your breath—but it WILL happen at some point as it's something I really want to do.

R: One Man and his mic is an absolutely fantastic retro podcast. Can you tell our readers about this and what inspired you to come up with the idea? Will One Man and his mic ever return?

K: Shucks! You're too kind [smiles]. OMAHM came about after the demise of the popular Slay Radio show "The Z-Show" (pronounced the Zee-Show) which I used to co-host with my good chum Boz. The show ended when Boz moved to Sweden and as I had neither the time or equipment to do a regular online radio show I decided to release a series of irregular podcasts instead. As I love retro computer music I came up with the idea of releasing a series of one-hour shows dedicated to either a specific computer system or retro musician. The shows proved to be rather popular as I seemed to get the right balance of music, waffle between tracks, trivia and humour. There are currently 10 shows available which can all be downloaded from www.binaryzone.org/podcast/... Will OMAHM ever return? Oh yes! Series 2 is currently being planned but at the moment I don't actually have a working microphone as the one I used for the first 10 shows is busted. I'm planning to buy myself a nice new mic in the New Year so look out for "One Man & His NEW Mic" in 2010!

R: What's this I hear about you working on a television programme called BITS? What happened there?

K: [laughs] That was a mad few years of my life! Basically, I was a huge fan of the show as it was about computer games and was presented by three lovely young ladies (Aleks Krotoski, Emily Newton-Dunn and Emily Booth). I produced a website devoted to the show called "The Bits Grab Fest" and I kind of got adopted by the show after a while. I was featured on the show a few times getting up to various retro-computing shenanigans and I became their unofficial "retro researcher". I helped out the team by supplying them with emulator software that they used for various features on the show. One of my proudest to moments was to be featured in the end credits of the very last show...! I was also lucky enough to be invited to the Bits series 5 launch party which is where I met Emily Booth for the first time. I asked Emily if she wanted an official website



The BITS girls

"As I love retro computer music I came up with the idea of releasing a series of one-hour shows dedicated to either a specific computer system or retro musician."

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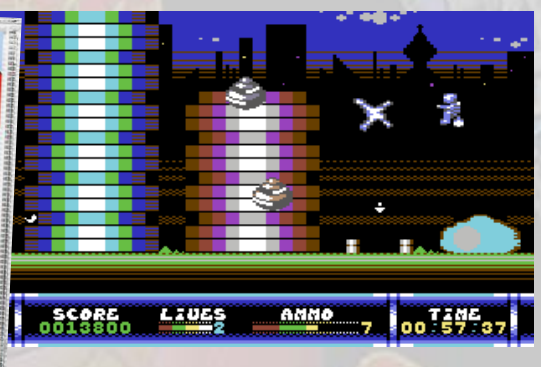
"Psytronik Software started in 1993 when Jon Wells was looking for someone to publish his game Sceptre of Baghdad."



and then we spent about three years dossing around in Soho doing photo-shoots and whatnot for her website, the now sadly defunct "Bouff.tv". It was a tough job but somebody had to do it (grins). Don't worry Bouff-fans, Emily will be bouncing back onto the internet soon on her new official website (www.emilybooth.net) which I'm currently busy working on.

R: Tell us about Psytronik Software and why you decided to launch an indie software publishing house.
K: Psytronik Software started in 1993 when Jon Wells was looking for someone to publish his game *Sceptre of Baghdad*. The game was meant to have been published by Atlantis Software but they had sunk without a trace (ho-ho. See what I did there). The 8-bit commercial software scene was dying out at this time so I came up with the idea of launching a new software label to release commercial games for people like Jon. *Sceptre of Baghdad* was the first Psytronik release and this was followed by the *Archetype* and *COPS III* twin-pack (featuring enhanced SEUCK games by Alf Yngve). I then released *The Shoot 'Em Up Destruction Set* which was a compilation of four games, again by Alf Yngve. The sales of the 1993 / 1994 releases weren't very impressive as I think the poor quality of the packaging let them down. At the time I only had access to very limited equipment and no budget whatsoever and so had to present the games with photocopied inlays that were literally put together using scissors and a glue-stick. Now flash-forward 15 years to 2008 and Jon Wells contacted me via email and asked if I would be interested in helping him to release his C64 conversion of the Speccy budget title *The Wild Bunch*. As I'd really enjoyed working with Jon in the past I jumped at the chance and designed the tape inlay for Jon in PhotoShop. As I now had a tape inlay template I decided to re-design the tape inlay for *Sceptre of Baghdad* in full colour to see how the Psytronik tape SHOULD have looked. Various people saw (and loved!) the new *Sceptre* inlay and urged me to re-release all the Psytronik games with new packaging—and so I did. Psytronik Software was officially reborn in 2008.

R: How many games are available and on what machines are they for?
K: There are now 16 games available on the Psytronik label. These are *Sceptre of Baghdad*, *Archetype* (+ *COPS III*), *Sub Hunter*, *Psykozone*, *Shoot 'Em Up Destruction Set*, *Escape From Arth*, *Mayhem in Monsterland*, *Creatures*, *Creatures 2*, *Armalyte*, *Joe Gunn* (Gold Edition), *Knight 'n' Grail*, *The Last Amazon Trilogy* and *Wanted:The Wild Bunch*. These are all Commodore 64 titles and there are two VIC-20 titles also available—*Carling the Spider* and *Realms of Quest*. Releases for other systems are also planned, including *Star Sabre 128K* and *Dead On Time* (Amstrad CPC) and *Armalyte* (PC CD-ROM).

R: How are the game tapes and disks manufactured, by yourself or a specialist company?
K: All the tapes and disks are manually duplicated by hand by little old me (an immensely time-consuming process!) and all the games are packaged using high-quality glossy packaging. The tape version of *The Wild Bunch* was professionally mastered, as there were a lot of pre-orders for the game so it saved a lot of time to have all the tapes duplicated in bulk. I still have to stick on all the tape labels and assemble the tape inlays though—although these were professionally printed which saved a lot of time (and printer ink!) and allowed me to produce the unique double-sided "reversible" *Wild Bunch* tape inlays.

R: There has been some fantastic cover artwork produced for Psytronik games. Who does the work on these and how is it done?
K: The artwork for the original Psytronik releases (*Sceptre of Baghdad*, *Archetype*, *The Shoot 'Em Up Destruction Set* and *Psykozone*) was produced by Alf Yngve who is a brilliant comic artist. These were coloured for the 2008 versions by Jon Wells (although I did the colouring for SEUDS using PhotoShop). The artwork for *Sub Hunter* was rendered in 3D by Jason Kelk and I added the

"I dropped [John & Steve Rowlands (Apex Productions)] a line to see if they would be interested in doing a 15th anniversary [Mayhem in Monsterland] release—they were."

logo and water effect etc. The picture for *Escape From Arth* was rendered in 3D by Mat 'Preferred Image' Recardo based on a design by Alf Yngve (and an idea from me to make them "look like the guys from *Halo*"). I produced the *Mayhem in Monsterland* artwork using the original release as a guide and a picture of Mayhem given to me many years ago by Steve Rowlands.

Trevor 'Smila' Storey produced the stunning artwork for the Psytronik re-releases of *Creatures*, *Creatures 2* and *Armalyte*—and it must be said I reckon his artwork for *Creatures* and *Creatures 2* are even BETTER than the original Oli Frey artwork (*shock!*). Trev also produced the artwork for *Joe Gunn* and *Carling the Spider*. The gorgeous cover-art for *Knight 'n' Grail* was painted by Håkon Repstad who had always dreamed about having his artwork used on a commercial C64 game [smiles]. The artwork for *The Wild Bunch* disk was produced by me (the tape inlay is directly based on the original Firebird version) and the artwork for *Realms of Quest* was produced by Bry Henry who also produced all the illustrations featured in the 36 page *Realms of Quest* manual. The actual tape inlays, disk inlays, disk sleeves and labels are all produced in PhotoShop by me and feature elements of the cover artwork along with game screenshots, game info and review blurb, etc.

R: Explain the various editions that the games come in (Digital, Budget and Premium Disk) and what gamers can expect from each of these packages?

K: The Digital Download versions of the Psytronik titles are designed for people who either do not have the original hardware to play the games on or for people who want to transfer the games onto the original hardware themselves. These can be played on emulators and you are supplied with both the tape and disk version of the game (as .tap and .d64 files respectively). The budget disk versions feature the game on a floppy 5.25" disk presented in a glossy full colour disk-sleeve with a colour label and a glossy instruction sheet. The Premium Disk Editions are my favourites! The floppy disk is presented in a proper 5.25" plastic disk box (similar to the ones used by Ocean Software and System 3 et al back in the day). Each Premium release features a full colour disk inlay inside the clear plastic box and the disk is presented in a glossy disk sleeve (the same as the budget version) complete with the label and instructions. It took me MONTHS to find the 5.25" disk cases but it was certainly worth it, as the Premium Editions look stunning.

R: Can anyone who develops a game send it in to you? What is the procedure for submitting games?

K: If anyone out there has produced a new title for the Commodore 64, VIC-20, Commodore Plus/4, ZX Spectrum or Amstrad CPC then I would be happy to consider it for publication on the Psytronik label. I'm also interested in PC titles—either new or retro related—as I would like to develop the Psytronik PC software range in the future. If you own the IP of an existing title then I'd also be interested in re-releasing it on the Psytronik label. The procedure for submitting a game is extremely simple, just email your game to kenz@binaryzone.org and I'll be in touch.

R: There have been special re-releases of *Mayhem in Monsterland*, *Armalyte*, *Creatures* and *Creatures 2*. Tell us some more about these intriguing re-releases and can we expect to see further similar releases?

K: I was extremely fortunate to be able to re-release *Mayhem in Monsterland*, *Creatures*, *Creatures 2* and *Armalyte* on the Psytronik label. I actually helped out John & Steve Rowlands (Apex Productions) with the production of a promo-video for *Mayhem* back in 1993 and so I dropped them a line to see if they would be interested in doing a 15th anniversary release—they were. So a deal was struck and the *Mayhem* re-release came about in a relatively short space of time. The IP for the

C64 *Creatures* games and *Armalyte* is actually owned by my good friend Andy Roberts and he gave me permission to re-release them on the Psytronik label. I was amazingly lucky to be able to re-release games like *Mayhem in Monsterland* and *Creatures*, and I guess it's all thanks to me being in the retro scene for so long and for picking up such great friends and contacts along the way. Stay tuned to www.psytronik.com as there's plenty more to come!

R: The classic C64 shoot-'em-up, *Armalyte*, is being remade for PC, with a demo currently available on Psytronik's website. How did this remake come about and what can we expect from this release?

K: Trev & Stu of S-A-S designs have been busting to do a PC remake of *Armalyte* for a while now and as soon as Andy Roberts (who owns the IP) and the original game creators Dan Phillips and Robin Levy (Cyberdyne Systems) gave them the thumbs-up they got busy with their PC conversion. The end result is a stunning update of the original C64 game featuring amazing new graphics and sonics. All eight levels of the game are present along with a special mix-e-load music demo and a "making of the artwork" demo. What's great about the PC version is Trev & Stu worked closely with the original creators of the game to make sure the gameplay was absolutely perfect (Rob Levy actually submitted about seven pages of notes during the production of the PC version). I'm delighted to be able to present this PC version of *Armalyte* as the first Psytronik PC CD-ROM release and hopefully people will be happy with the result of all the hard work done by S-A-S Designs and Cyberdyne Systems.

I'm delighted to be able to present this PC version of Armalyte as the first Psytronik PC CD-ROM release and hopefully people will be happy with the result...

R: Which retrogaming system is your favourite and what retro game do you keep coming back to?

K: As you may have guessed from the Psytronik catalogue my main retro-love is the Commodore 64—mainly due to the SID chip as I'm a massive fan of SID music. Funnily enough, I always thought the Spectrum was a "prettier" machine and I recently re-sprayed my old yellowing C64 and gave it a ZX Spectrum style makeover—to see the result head on over to www.binaryzone.org/specadore64.php

As for the retro game I keep returning to it has to be *Uridium* on the C64—which was the game that made me buy a C64 in the first place!

R: Kenz, thank you for taking the time to talk to us. Is there anything else you would like to add?

K: No problem at all, it was fun! I would like to end by sending a massive thanks to everyone who has helped and supported all my mad retro schemes over the years—Binary Zone Interactive, One Man & His Mic, *Commodore Zone* and Psytronik Software couldn't have existed without the help of a LOT of people over the years. Cheers guys 'n' gals! I'll see you all ... IN THE FUTURE!

Relevant weblinks

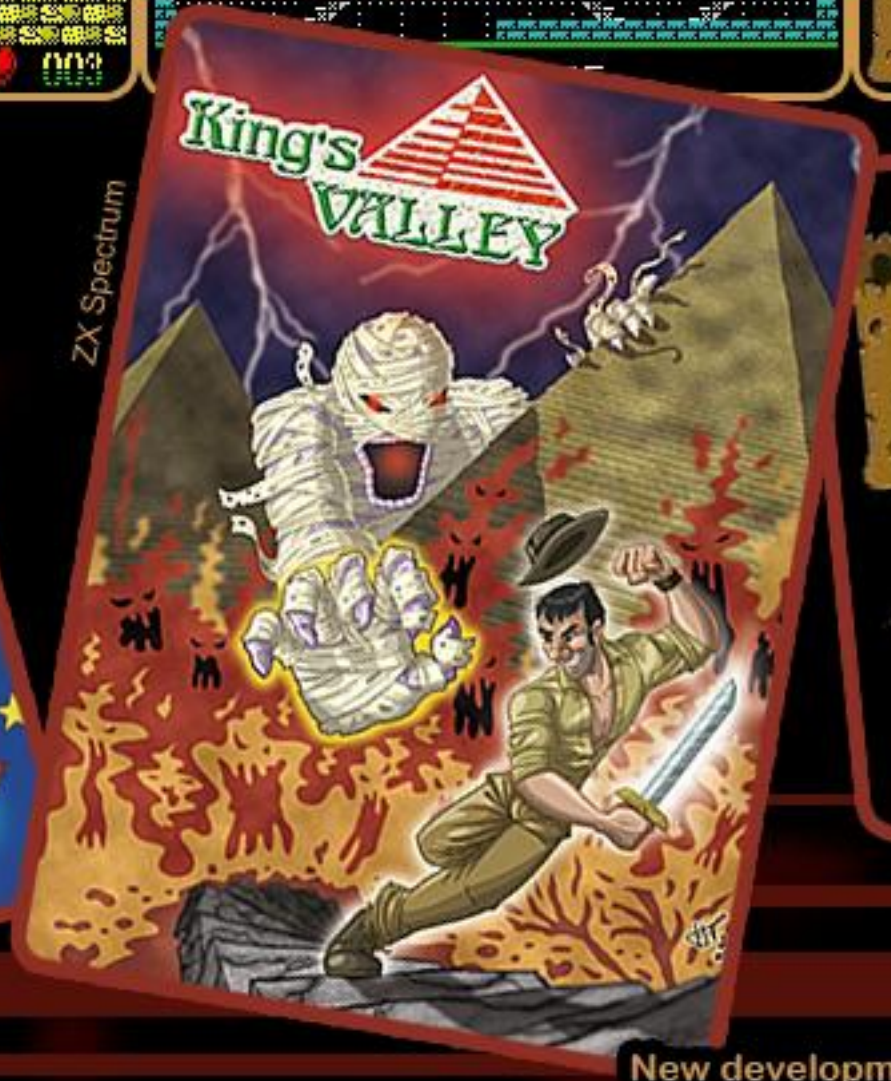
All Psytronik games, news and info can be found at:
http://www.psytronik.net/

Commodore Zone, One Man and His Mic and other great retro goodness cand be found at:
http://binaryzone.org/

Follow Kenz's updates at:
http://psytronik.blogspot.com/

Kenz's ZX Specadore 64

Psytronik software has been featured in many publications, including Micro Mart and Retro Gamer



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RETRO RESPECT

RAID ON BUNGELING BAY

Words & screenshots by
Gabriel McGrath

DETAILS

Developer:	Will Wright
Publisher:	Brøderbund
Released:	1984
Platform:	C64 (other ports)
Genre:	Shoot-'em-up

"Defence network computer. New. Powerful. They say it got smart... a new order of intelligence. Decided our fate in a microsecond... extermination. I was born after, in the ruins. Grew up there. Hiding from the H-K's. Hunter Killers... built in automated factories." Kyle Reese, *Terminator*, October 1984.

"The War Machine. Directed by an Artificial Intelligence. Day and night, these factories churn out an endless armada of remote-controlled weapons of doom. Their ultimate aim is clear: the final destruction of civilisation as we know it." Box art, *Raid on Bungeling Bay*, October 1984.

Twentyfive years ago, I was too young to watch *The Terminator* in the cinema. But I was old enough to play *Raid on Bungeling Bay* on my Commodore 64. Both were tales of "technology gone wrong". Both used the memorable imagery of a robotic skull, with glowing eyes. And both were the first small step in a billion dollar franchise.

No, *Raid on Bungeling Bay* never got a sequel. There's no massive *RoBB* fanbase. And it only appeared on three platforms (C64, NES and MSX). But its development directly led to the creation of *Sim City*, which led to *The Sims*—the biggest selling PC game in history. But hang on… how did we get from "remote-controlled weapons of doom" to virtual dollhouses? Let's go back to 1984…

It only appeared on three platforms, but its development directly led to the creation of Sim City, which led to The Sims—the biggest selling PC game in history

"The Bungeling Empire continues the course of war…" so begins the *RoBB* game manual for the Commodore 64. And indeed, the Bungelings were a consistent foe in early Broderbund games. In the *Lode Runner* series, you were challenged to steal the Empire's gold reserve. In *Choplifter*, you were tasked with rescuing hostages taken by the Bungelings. And that game had many similarities with *Raid on Bungeling Bay*.

Both titles feature a helicopter, with strong momentum in its movement. Both feature a mixture of air-based targets to shoot with a machinegun, and fortified buildings to "bomb" from above. And both titles require the copter to return to "base" between sorties.

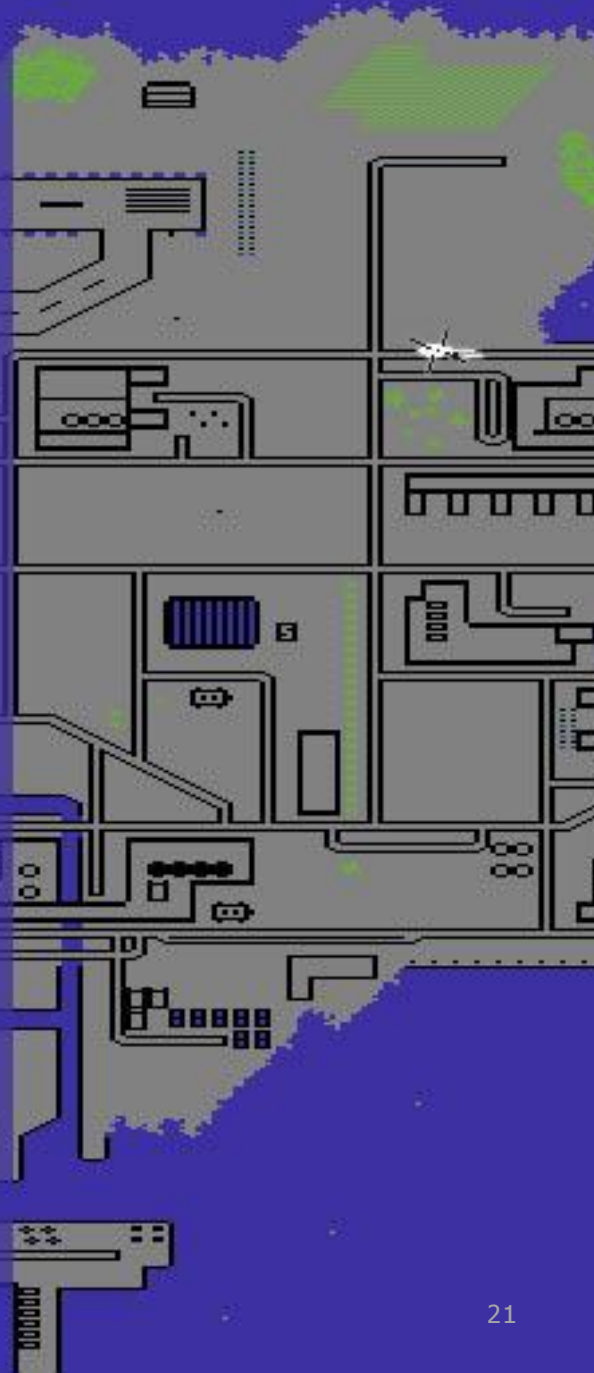
In the case of *Raid on Bungeling Bay*, your base of operations is an aircraft carrier, in the middle of an ocean. Pressing fire will start the rotors, whilst pressing the joystick forward starts your forward movement. Left and right turns the copter in the appropriate direction. The fire button has dual roles, with fast presses to fire the machineguns, and slow presses to drop one of nine (replaceable) bombs.

The gameplay view is top-down and player-centred, in the style of arcade games like *Time Pilot*. The world scrolls smoothly in eight directions. You'll fly over islands, which are dominated by six factories. Each contributes to the Bungling Empire's war effort by manufacturing parts for the enemy's battleship. Your mission is to take each factory out, by bombing it repeatedly. In some cases, the factory requires more than nine bombs. This means dashing to your carrier to refill, and returning to finish the deed.

Stealing bombs from the enemy's airbase

Your carrier. Your home

Factory destroyed!



Your carrier is under attack!

Enemy battleship launched!

If you're gonna die, at least take out a factory!

Your other main target is the enemy's shipyard. Here, you can see their battleship slowly coming together. Bombing the shipyard will set back the vessel's construction—giving you more time for other priorities. This is an important point—if you only attack the factories, the battleship will be launched before you complete the mission. And once this happens, it heads straight for your carrier, firing homing missiles.

RoBB is therefore a balancing act, between attacking the factories, and bombing the shipyard to delay the battleship's construction. But the Bungeling War Machine has appropriate defences for its manufacturing base. The roads between each factory are patrolled by tiny tanks. The straits between each island are patrolled by armed vessels. Yet these low-level enemies provide little resistance.

The real danger comes from the enemy's anti-aircraft guns and jets. The gun emplacements are positioned near factories, so it's important to take them out before a bombing run. In time, the AA guns are rebuilt, so it's a case of destroy the factory, and get outta there—fast. Enemy aircraft come in two colours—white jets attack your copter, whilst black jets will bomb your carrier. You'll need to take out the former to preserve yourself—and the latter to preserve your base of operations.

Your helicraft has a damage rating—out of 100. This can only be repaired by landing on your carrier. At 50 percent damage, your helicraft's top speed is reduced and the screen border turns yellow. At 80 percent, you slow down further, and the border turns red. Exceed 100 percent damage, and your craft will start spiralling out of control, before smashing to the ground/ocean below. It's incredibly satisfying if you're able to crash your helicopter into a factory, or even better, the enemy battleship. A successful kamikaze attack is the equivalent of about five bombs. And the act of wrestling with the joystick, while your damaged helicraft veers about… is a fantastically intense experience.

Initially, *Raid on Bungeling Bay* is fairly easy. But once you've destroyed your first factory, things start getting mean. More and more black jets will attack your carrier. The white jets swap their cannons for air-to-air missiles. And the gun emplacements are now rebuilt very quickly. If that's not bad enough, they also start alternating between bullets and deadly homing missiles. Outrunning a missile is challenging, but possible... as long as your craft is in good condition.

RoBB throws many simultaneous problems at the player, but you always know what's going on. There's a simple radar in the lower left corner (a la *Wizard of Wor*), and a status bar ("Your carrier is under attack") on the bottom of the screen. The changing colour of the screen border gives you an almost subliminal indication of how much trouble you're in. This is a very clever touch. You may be overwhelmed at times, but never due to a lack of information.

If you lose all your lives without wiping out all the factories, the game is over and your mission a failure. If you destroy all six factories, the Bungeling Empire will surrender, and you win (even if they've launched their battleship). This reveals a newspaper front page describing

If you died as you destroyed the final factory, the headline will commemorate your sacrifice (and this was two years before games like Bubble Bobble featured alternate endings)

Raid on Bungeling Bay's sprites and background are functional rather than dazzling. But the game's visual kick is one of scope, rather than detail

your heroics, and amazingly—it changes depending on the outcome of battle. If you died as you destroyed the final factory, the headline will commemorate your sacrifice (and this was two years before games like *Bubble Bobble* featured alternate endings). Once you've read the newspaper, there's a parade in your honour... complete with cheering crowds, a motorcade and fireworks!

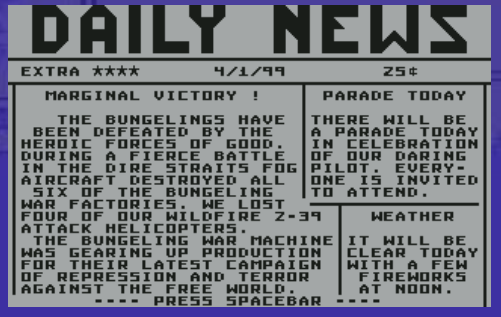
Raid on Bungeling Bay's sprites and background are functional rather than dazzling. But the game's visual kick is one of scope, rather than detail. It was one of the first Commodore games with a "world" to explore via eight-way scrolling. And the planet you patrol is huge, spanning ten screens across by ten screens down. Sound is less impressive... with no music and only basic sound effects. But these are only minor issues.

The designer of *Raid on Bungeling Bay* spent some time putting the game map together. As he was playing with the map editor he'd developed, he had a thought. "What if other people liked to make their own little worlds?" As you may know, the designer in question was Will Wright. And despite his success with *RoBB*, Wright's idea of a city-building game on the Commodore 64 failed to excite Broderbund. They wanted him to add clear winning/losing events to the game. He wanted to create "a playground, like a train set". And Broderbund decided not to release the game. Four years later, Wright formed his own publishing company. Its first release, *Sim City* was a big success. And its spiritual successor *The Sims* has been a phenomenon.

A few games have appeared since *RoBB* with loosely similar design and gameplay. *Thunderforce 2* on the Mega Drive/Genesis, and *Zone 66* (PC) are two examples. But eight years after its release, the spirit of Will Wright's game really lived on—in a 16-bit console classic. As Julian Rignall remarked at the time, EA's *Desert Strike* is similar in concept to *Raid on Bungeling Bay*. The helicopters move with a comparable momentum, and again, one can tackle the numerous targets in any order you like. As far as unofficial remakes are concerned, I've only seen three completed. There's a great flash remake called *Chopraider*, an XNA game called *Exisled* and a freeware PC remake by Australian programmer Jason Brown.

Raid on Bungeling Bay may not have had the same obvious cultural impact as that other big entertainment release (hello Arnie) in October 1984, but it's a great game. And, as *RoBB* celebrates its 25th birthday, it well and truly deserves some "Retro Respect".

Surrounded by enemy aircraft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MARGINAL VICTORY !
THE BUNGELINGS HAVE BEEN DEFEATED BY THE HEROIC FORCES OF GOOD. DURING A FIERCE BATTLE IN THE DIRE STRAITS FOG AIRCRAFT DESTROYED ALL SIX OF THE BUNGELING WAR FACTORIES. WE LOST FOUR OF OUR WILDFIRE Z-39 ATTACK HELICOPTERS.
THE BUNGELING WAR MACHINE WAS GEARING UP PRODUCTION FOR THEIR LATEST CAMPAIGN OF REPRESSION AND TERROR AGAINST THE FREE WORLD.
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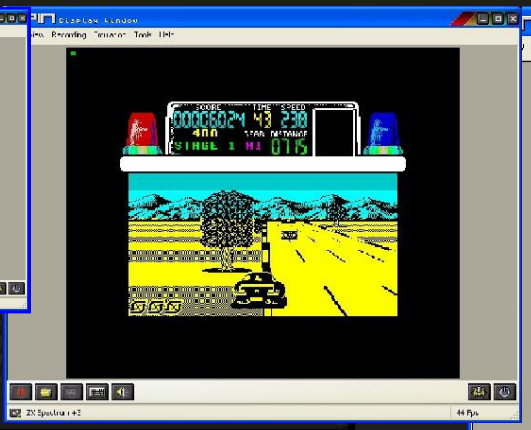
THERE WILL BE A PARADE TODAY IN CELEBRATION OF OUR DARING PILOT. EVERY-ONE IS INVITED TO ATTEND.
WEATHER
IT WILL BE CLEAR TODAY WITH A FEW FIREWORKS AT NOON.

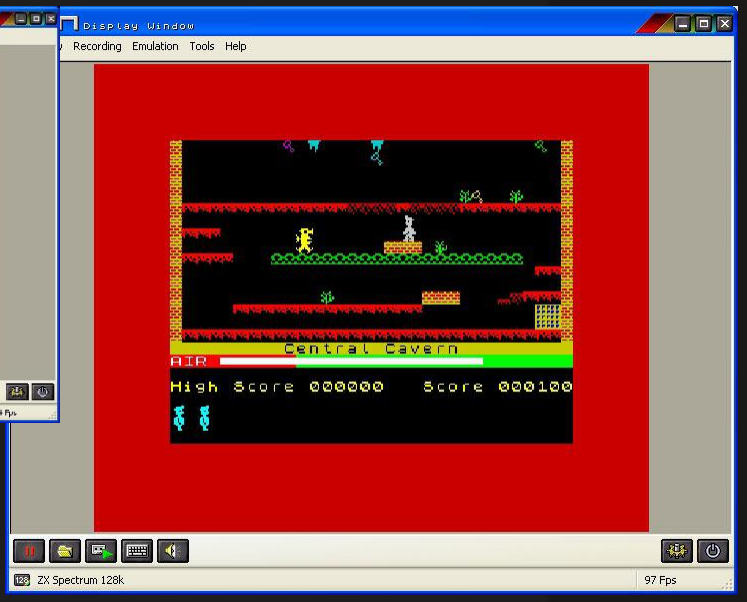
You've made the papers!

Now that's an ending!

ZX SPIN: EMULATOR PROFILE

Words & screenshots by
CaptainD





The ZX Spectrum was one of most famous 8-bit computers of all time, so it was only natural that we would profile one of the best ZX emulators around.

ZX Spin turns your humble PC into a high-powered ZX Spectrum—oh wait that should be the other way around. Still, despite amazing advances in technology, few computers have inspired the sort of love that the dear old Speccy seems to have, what with its slow tapes, rubber keyboards, power packs that kept falling off, disk drives that used disks no other computer could use and insanely slow tape decks that took a whole five minutes to load *Match Day 2*, *Taipan* or *Head Over Heels*. Just why did we love the Speccy? Games, of course—lots of them, and some real classics.

So, to relive those heady days of 8-bit excitement, we could either try to buy an extant machine at a car boot sale, find a bootlegged Russian model, or use an emulator. Since the first two options have already been covered in previous issues of *Retroaction*, I'll tackle the latter.

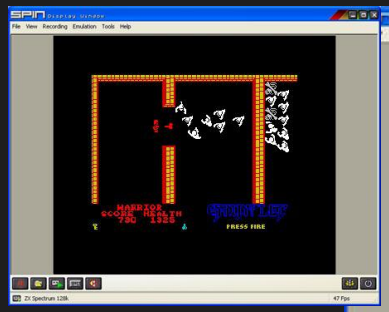
There are quite a few ZX emulators around, but for a long time I've used ZX Spin, and for the most part it works very well. ZX Spin emulates a whole range of Spectrum machines, from the humble 48K model to the +3 (3.0 inch disks—why?!), through to 256-colour models. If you're technically minded, you can play around with all manner of settings, including a debugger, but for me it's enough to be able to play the games again. Spectrum games, which come in both tape (.tap and .tzx) and disk (.dsk) format, can be found all over the internet. You may have to check that the game you've chosen is right for the particular model you're emulating at the time, but basically if you choose the Spectrum +2 (128K, and incidentally a game I owned many years ago), you should be okay with pretty much everything.

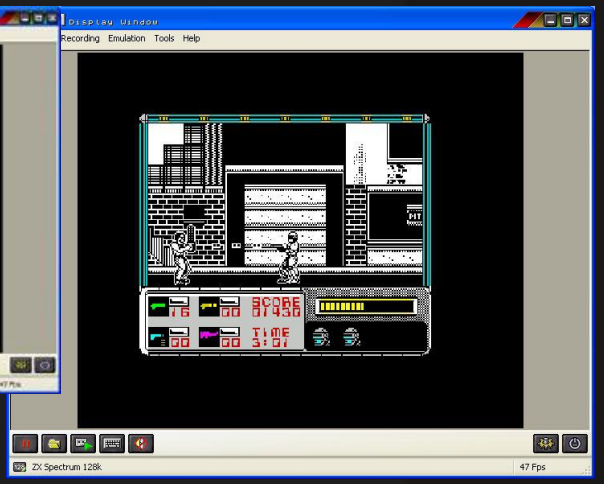
From colour-clash to epilepsy-inducing loading screens, it's all there if you want it (though games naturally load much faster than they did with the old tape deck).

SPIN Display Window

File View Recording Emulation Tools Help

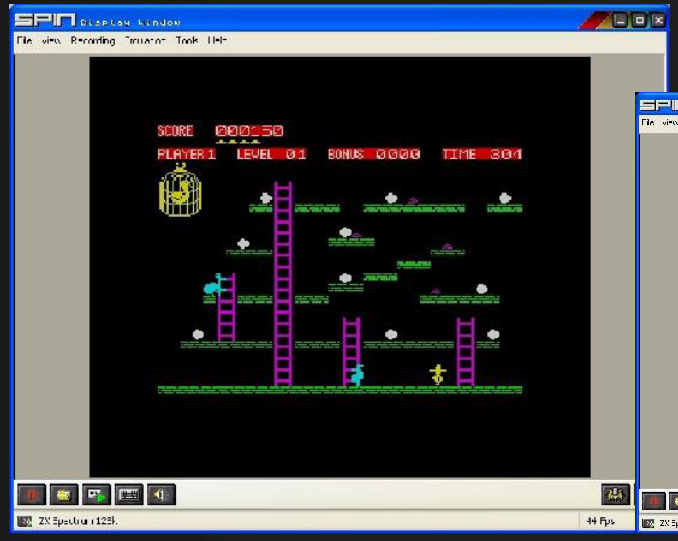
If you have fond memories of the Speccy, you'll get a lot of enjoyment from the ZX Spin emulator.





With a simple drag and drop action, the games work well and without any annoying adverts, though the joystick emulation could be better, that's something I'm sure will be addressed in future versions. The ZX Spin emulator is very stable—I've never had it crash on me, even running under the troublesome 64-bit Vista—and with very few exceptions it has ran every Speccy game I've tried on it perfectly. From colour-clash to epilepsy-inducing loading screens, it's all there if you want it (though games naturally load much faster than they did with the old tape deck).

The five main functions of ZX Spin are identified by five buttons at the bottom left of the emulator window: pause/resume, open file, start/stop tape, enable/disable keystick and mute/un-mute sound. There is also a plethora of various other functions—some usual, while others are not so. The 'save current screen' function enables you to save a snapshot of the current screen, either in .bmp, .scr or .gif formats. There are great options available in the recording menu, including video and audio recording capabilities, making it easy to record your gaming feats or favourite Speccy tune. But this simply scratches the surface of what ZX Spin can do and it really needs to be tried out to discover all its treats.



If you have fond memories of the Speccy, you'll get a lot of enjoyment from the ZX Spin emulator. For those interested in emulating custom systems, creating videos of old games and hacking through the hardware setting the options are all there—but for those who, like me, just want to relive some gaming memories with the minimum of fuss, the program is set up to be extremely simple to use.

For more information, and to download the latest version of ZX Spin, visit **http://www.zxspin.co.uk/**

ZX Spectrum 128k 50 Fps

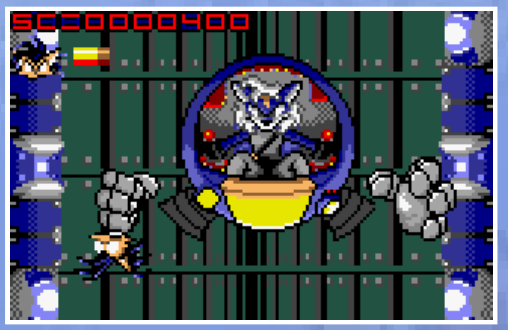
ZAKU

Words by **Gnome**, screenshots by **SFT**

The Atari Lynx was an impressive piece of hardware, that due to some minor design-flaws failed to set the world on fire. It only managed a distant third place during the first handheld console wars, though, despite its less than stellar sales and handfull of released games, strangely remains alluring to this day. Oh, yes, and it's been my all time favourite console for years, so, uhm, good news everyone! There's a new Lynx game available: *Zaku*...

Zaku is a horizontal shoot-'em-up (or shmup) in the vein of *Air Zonk*, that is easily the best genre offering the console ever managed, but more on that later. After all, the first thing that impresses about the game is its packaging and the apparently amazing production values. The box looks and feels exactly like the ones the official Lynx releases of yore used to sport, comes complete with an excellent, full-colour, 30 pages long manual and—most impressive of all—a proper Lynx cartridge, unlike anything the homebrew/indie community had produced so far. It is a proper Lynx cart. A proper 4 meg Lynx cart, which, to be honest, was quite a rarity even during the console's heyday.

Then again, *Zaku* is far from an ordinary game. It is a shmup with a tongue-in-cheek plot, that's actually amusing and that's even rarer in the world of video gaming, let alone in the world of shoot-'em-ups. *Zaku*, the game's titular heroine, you see, besides being one of the few non-sexualized gaming leads, is fighting against shovelware, uninspired games and greedy publishers by attempting to recover the code of the Rarity 9 program. I love it. Really do.



As for the game itself, well, it is as mentioned a horizontal scrolling shoot-'em-up that plays quite a bit like *Air Zonk* with a few extra touches. Players fly from left to right while either avoiding or destroying a variety of surreal enemies and collecting power-ups. *Zaku* herself is a versatile little character. She can fly, charge up shots, use her rapid fire abilities, fire her back blaster and even use a devastating yet highly protective personal force field; the clapping shield. The game is quite tactical as far as shmups go and most enemies, especially bosses and sub-bosses, require different strategies to overcome them.

Soundwise *Zaku* might not be spectacular, but is definitely on par with the average Lynx game. Then again, it's the graphics of the game that set it apart. They are really impressive, sporting huge sprites, vibrant colours, cartoon aesthetics, some intriguing 2D effects and, above all, top quality parallax scrolling. What's more they are incredibly varied making excellent use of the cartridge's 4 megs of memory.

Admittedly, the genre competition was never that great on the Lynx, but *Zaku* is by far the best shmup for the console, even beating the venerable Zarlor Mercenary. I'd say it easily makes it into the top 5 Lynx games ever released, and is a mandatory purchase for all Lynx owning retro gamers.

DETAILS

Developer:	PenguiNet
Publisher:	Super Fighter Team
Platform:	Atari Lynx
Weblink:	zaku-lynx.com
Genre:	Shoot-'em-up

RATINGS

Graphics:	96%
Sound:	78%
Gameplay:	84%
Overall:	**91%**

A killer-app released 20 years too late

Super Fighter Team — besides sporting an absolutely brilliant name — is possibly the only indie developer for retro platforms that has managed to impress the mainstream gaming media with, among other excellent releases, its shiny new cartridges for the Sega Mega Drive / Genesis and the Atari Lynx. To complement our review of *Zaku*, here are Brandon Cobb (president, Super Fighter Team) and Osman Celimli (president, PenguiNet; Zaku designer / developer) to discuss both the game and Super Fighter Team...

Brandon Cobb (president, Super Fighter Team)

Osman Celimli (president, PenguiNet; Zaku designer / developer)

Retroaction: Care to introduce us to Super Fighter Team and its members?
Brandon Cobb: Super Fighter Team is the future of classic gaming. We partner with top game companies across the world as well as gifted independent developers, and in between it all we also find time to churn out our own original titles. Our goal is to always deliver the highest quality product at the most convenient price—or, in some cases, as freeware.

I founded the company in May of 2004. I wear a plethora of hats, ranging from directing and delegating to designing and lead testing, in addition to countless others. I'm also the company's official snack eater, which as you can imagine is a highly sought after position.

Though we employ a different sized team for each individual game project, some of our core members include: Derrick Sobodash, Yu-Chen Shih, Kim Biu Wong and Guoqing Xie.

RA: When, and how, did you guys start?
BC: As a child, I owned no video game systems. Instead, I had an Apple II and later, a PC. When *Street Fighter II* came along and changed the world, everyone I knew was playing the hell out of it. I wanted to do the same. Thing is, there wasn't an official PC version yet, so I picked up on a fighting game out of Taiwan called Super Fighter. It was, quite simply, "my" *Street Fighter II*. In the years to follow, I wanted to share the game with the world and express my gratitude to the company that made it: C&E, Inc. Eventually I was able to accomplish both goals, something my friends and family had thought impossible. Success came from following my dreams. That is the basis of the company.

RA: What was the central idea behind Super Fighter Team and its projects?
BC: 1). To embrace classic machines that the big companies have abandoned.
2). To introduce some of Taiwan's best software to the rest of the world.
3). To bring about in our customers the same wonderful feelings that I experienced the first time I played my favorite video games.

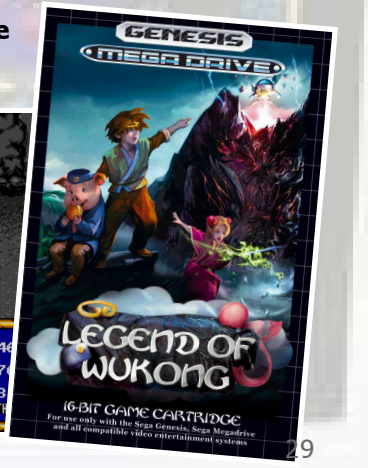
RA: *Beggar Prince* and *Legend of Wukong* are two absolutely excellent Sega 16-bit games. Are you proud of them?
BC: *Beggar Prince* was our first commercial project, and a huge undertaking, considering. The original Chinese version of the game was rife with bugs and we had no contact with its programmer. Just when our guys had finished with all the reprogramming, we split from our publisher and went it alone. Every hurdle you can think of was thrown in front of us, but we vaulted over them all to land squarely on the finish line. The sleepless nights, the aggravation, the wondering when and if we'd ever finish... I could write a book about it all. But the game shipped. It shipped, and it shipped on time—just like all of our games have. And the world reacted in a way never before seen from the release of a new game for a classic machine.

Legend of Wukong gave me an exciting opportunity to dig into the framework of a role playing game and build it up into something stronger. Instead of spending time directing programmers to bugs and suggesting ways to fix them, I was able to spend more time designing neat little features and enhancements. I got in there pretty deep, building up my drive as we built up the game. It may never enjoy the amount of success that Beggar Prince has, but it will always have a special place in my heart.

RA: Of the specialist press' reaction?
BC: Never in my life could I have imagined how huge the press would be. It was overwhelming. I smiled every time I saw the name "C&E Inc." in print alongside ours, because they inspired me to start the whole thing; they fueled the dream.

RA: Did they sell well enough to boost your morale?
BC: Back before it all started, I remember sharing my ideas with a close friend. He thought I was a bit daft when I told him, "If I'm able to reach just ONE person who loves these games as much as I do, I'll be satisfied." Since our humble beginnings, we've reached thousands.

RA: What are you looking



for when releasing a new game or updating / translating / finishing an unknown classic?
BC: One word: perfection.

RA: By the way, I do think it's wise to focus on the games' packaging. Would you mind telling us how you make it? Oh, and why would be nice too.
Osman Celimli: Heh, that was Brandon's domain. I actually got to sit back and watch, for once.

BC: It's not overly complicated: you've just got to be able to find a print house that's crazy enough to churn out custom cardstock boxes for you, in miniscule numbers, for a low price. You find one of those, you're set. [smirks]

We take the packaging design as seriously as we take the development of the game. They're all equally important parts of the same whole. You can't just take a brilliant Lynx game and stuff it uncomfortably in an odd-shaped, orange case made of dull plastic. You've got to add some panache while keeping the original spirit alive. Hold a copy of *Zaku* up next to any game that Atari produced for the Lynx, and you'll see what I mean. In fact, some of our customers have even commented that they feel our packaging is superior to Atari's.

RA: Could you name some of your collective favourite classic games?
BC: *Alone in the Dark*, *Quest for Glory III* and *IV*, *Gobliins 2* and *Goblins 3* (PC); *Earthbound* (SNES); *Star Blazer*, *Neuromancer* (Apple II).

RA: What about your favourite game systems?
BC: The Genesis and Lynx are both high on the chart, but that goes without saying. Aside from those two, I've had a deep love for the original black and white Gameboy for longer than I can remember. The newer incarnations of the machine were never able to deliver the same kind of magic, where software was concerned. I'm interested in the 32X, at least from a hardware perspective. Oh yes—and the Super A'can makes for a nifty doorstop.

RA: So, why chose the Atari Lynx as a platform to develop for?
OC: I originally was interested in developing something for the GameBoy, since it was, and still is my favorite console. But I couldn't find any simple tutorials to get acquainted with how the machine works. Later on, I came into possession of a Lynx after discovering that *Chip's Challenge* was originally developed for the machine, a game I had very fond memories of on the PC. For whatever reason, I decided to try working with the Lynx hardware, and picked it up very quickly with help from Björn Spruck and Karri Kaksonen. So there really wasn't any incentive in terms of Lynx nostalgia on my part, I just grew to enjoy working with the machine.

BC: I've always wanted to have some hand in the creation and release of a new game for the Lynx, ever since I first set eyes on the machine.

RA: And why go for a side-scrolling shoot-'em-up?
BC: That's the sort of game that grabbed Osman's attention, at the time. I believe it was a fine choice. The Lynx had a handful of shooters produced for it during its time on the market, but none of them really made you want to jump up on the table and do a little dance. I danced when I first saw *Zaku*, that's for damn sure—and I'm not even the biggest fan of shoot-'em-ups.
OC: When I started working on *Zaku*, I was a big fan of *Air Zonk*, and many of the parallels between the two are pretty obvious. I'm not a big "shmup" guy either. But I'm glad I chose the side-scrolling shooter genre, since you have lots of creative freedom in it, and there's a big focus on having the player pick up the game quickly. It's an enjoyable thing to work with.

RA: How would you describe *Zaku*? What would you say are its most important features?
BC: *Zaku* is a 4-megabit game card packed to the brim with challenges, humor and best of all, fun. It complements every strength of the Lynx hardware, running smoothly the entire time. You'll quickly and easily become charmed by and helplessly addicted to this game.
OC: A game that just tries to be a game, I think that is what's most important.

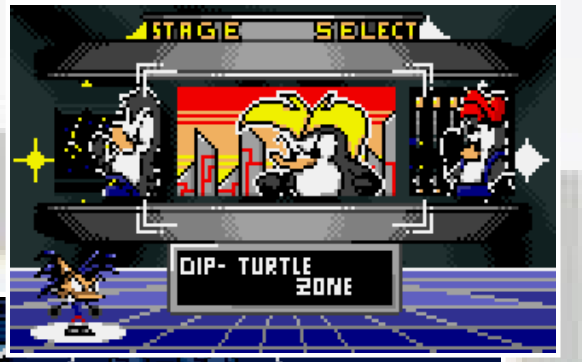
RA: Care to tell us the story behind the development of the game?
OC: I started *Zaku* when I was 14, and the game shipped when I was 20. That's six years of development when you're going to be changing as a person. In reality, *Zaku* started out as "Let's just try and replicate *Air Zonk* on the Lynx," then "Well this is kind of working out, so let's put some placeholder characters in there," and eventually "We have something here, let's try to finish it and add as much originality as we can to the concept." By far, the most difficult thing for me was to continue working on the game while I was coming up with ideas which, frankly, I felt were far superior to and much more original than *Zaku*. But I said the game would get finished, and it did, so that's satisfying in itself. I enjoy the process of designing and developing games, and continue to do so because of that.

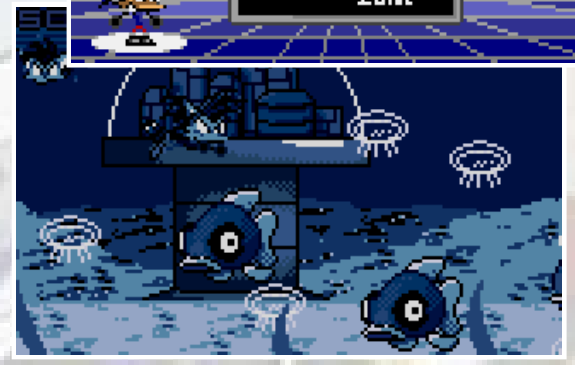
On a more technical note, we used a

combination of Epyx's original development kit on the Amiga, Bastian Schick's BLL, and some of our own tools. Pixels were laid out in Microsoft Paint, and the code was written in Microsoft Notepad. The notable thing is that while nearly all of the engine and libraries were new, and written by us, we decided to use Epyx's HSPL sound engine. This is the same audio system used in the Lynx's early titles such as *Chip's Challenge* or *California Games*, which I think is something. I spent many hours hand-converting the MIDI's my brother sent me into Epyx's SPL scripting language, since their conversion program wasn't very effective. There was a constant effort to give good results for the player, even if it meant more work for us.

The overall development process wasn't particularly special. I tried to keep things organized, particularly when we brought on additional background artists. We'd set deadlines and work towards them effectively. It's a project you do in your spare time, and life has to come first, so organizing things is particularly important. But *Zaku* shipped, and things worked out in the end.

RA: How did Super Fighter Team get to hook-up with PenguiNet?
BC: I frequent a few message boards that focus on Atari's machines, including the Lynx. One day I ran across a discussion regarding a new Lynx game that was in the early stages of development; in fact, it was only a programming exercise at the time. I took a look at the public demo, and immediately realized the huge potential it had. Wasn't long after that I contacted Osman and offered our publishing services. He wasn't sure which way he wanted to go, at first. However after a friend of his showed him a copy of *Beggar Prince*, he realized the kind of quality we could bring to the production, and we became partners in the quest to bring *Zaku* from concept to completed game.
OC: I'm pretty amazed Brandon went for it, too. When he contacted me, I was still in high school, and at this point, I would never want to negotiate anything with my sixteen year old self. But hey, it seems like things worked out for both of us.





RA: What were the major influences behind *Zaku*?
OC: Again, the influence from *Air Zonk* is pretty obvious, and one of the biggest challenges I had during development. I liked *Zonk*'s basic gameplay mechanics, the charge shot, fire boots, etc. Those are easy for the player to pick up, and I think can be used really creatively. But it seemed like they were tossed aside to constantly grab power ups and charge *Zonk*'s super attack. I prefer having the player creatively use the tools they start with, like in *Rocket Knight Adventures* or *Mole Mania*. So the design we went with was sort of a compromise between these two ideals. There's lots of art design, pacing techniques, and throwbacks to other things I enjoyed like *Sonic CD* and *Gunstar Heroes*. But the game really was mostly made from all the stuff my friends and myself used to come up with when we were young, along with some of my own adventures in dreamland.

RA: What were the goals you set to achieve?
OC: I think it's important to focus on simple fun as a first project. *Zaku* was by no means a small undertaking, but I'm glad we focused on making the game enjoyable rather than exclusively focusing on a technical achievement or story. So for me, the real drive was not only what Brandon mentioned, but to try and make the game simple and not come off as overly prestigious to players. Something it seems many small team games seem to have issues with. I think we succeeded in that regard. If you want to get into game development in the long run, which I'd like to do, the best way is to make games. That's why *Zaku* exists, to make sure I can control this stuff, since that isn't easy. Now that the game is out, I can look over what people enjoy and get bothered by, and use that to improve what I work on next.

RA: Are you happy with the final release?
OC: I'm very satisfied with how *Zaku* turned out.
BC: I'm over the moon about it.

RA: We must admit it is a technical masterpiece with excellent graphics. Any idea as to how this was possible on the now humble Atari handheld?
BC: The Lynx is capable of stunning results. A developer just needs to have and exhibit some drive in order to showcase them. We're not wizards; we

simply love the machine and we weren't about to settle for an amateur result when we knew we could make the system truly shine. Had Atari followed the same approach, perhaps their machine would have enjoyed more commercial success.
OC: You have to put in the effort, since players will notice it if you don't. I'm not an amazing programmer, and *Zaku* isn't a perfect game, but there was a constant attempt to add "one more layer" of polish or creative use of the hardware if we could make the game play better by doing so. Things like the gradient background and camera panning during Emp's battle. They may have added a week or two to development, but it's worth it to learn how to do the effects, and let the player enjoy them. But I have to credit the Lynx designers here too, it really was a great machine to work with.

RA: And let me congratulate you on a female lead character! Any comments?
OC: The decision to make Zaku a girl was actually contributed by my father. He was looking over some of the early designs for the character and mentioned that I should make one of them (which ended up being the design we chose) a girl. I kind of just went with that, there wasn't any real thought behind it.
BC: Score one for women's lib!

RA: How about some comments on the game's video game related plot?
OC: I feel that, especially in comparison to other industries, the game industry has to hold the record for terrible business decisions and failures. Bran and his cronies are idiots, I don't think anything is more appropriate than them attempting to take over an already stupid market. With the way the game industry works now, *Zaku*'s plot is pretty feasible. Nothing makes sense in it, and we try to make fun of all of it, even the retro collectors, since there really is just too much to laugh at.
BC: Think of the great crash of 1983. Think about any time that companies have flooded the market with bad games. We won't succumb to that. We'll rise above. Tailoring a story to that end is only quite fitting, don't you think?

RA: And, really, how did you manage to come up with an authentic Lynx cartridge?
OC: Hah, that was another one of those things I just got to watch.
BC: Had 'em made up from scratch, of course. No one's going to have the plastic mold for a Lynx game card lying around, not even Atari. Those molds are expensive, but hey, you only live twice! Gotta go for the gusto, otherwise there's no point in even considering it at all. I mean what's the alternative—shipping the game as a naked PCB? That would just be silly.

RA: What about the excellent box and manual?
BC: Derrick designed them, I wrote most of the text. It was a real gasser. Kim Biu added in the final touch: the little holder inside the box in which the game card is placed. Hats off to him for that!
OC: I added the pictures to Brandon's text in the manual.
BC: By that of course, he means he created a bunch of original artwork for the manual, then did the layout. Talk about dedication, eh?

RA: How has the wider retro (and indie) gaming community reacted to the release of *Zaku*?
OC: The response to the game has been very positive, which is great. But I think more importantly, people are letting us know not only what they enjoyed about the game, but what they'd like to be improved. Which is extremely helpful.
BC: They dig it! *Zaku* is scoring high reviews all over the place, and that's very inspiring for us. Especially after all the hard work and sacrifice, it's wonderful to know that people are going ape over the game.

RA: Are there any plans for a sequel? For another Lynx game perhaps?
BC: I'd love to have another go at the Lynx. We've been kicking some ideas around, but there's no definite plans as of yet.
OC: I really enjoyed working on *Zaku*, and with the Lynx platform. It's great fun to design things for *Zaku*'s world, since you really can do whatever you want. But at this point, I'd like to try something more original. Although if we did go through with a sequel to *Zaku*, Lynx or not, I think there's lots to tweak to make the mechanics more fun. Right now though, I'd like to take a break. After all, it's been six years.

RA: So, what does the future hold? Should we expect more impressive releases for retro machines?
BC: We're planning to release another new role playing adventure game for the Genesis / Mega Drive this year. I can't tell you how jazzed I am about that one. As well, we were fortunate enough to acquire half the back catalog of Panda Entertainment last year. They produced some of Taiwan's finest PC games of the early to mid-1990's, such as *Sango Fighter* and *Crazy Dodgeball*. We're already in the process of porting their assembly code over to C, for multi-platform consideration.

RA: Are there any ideas for developing retro-styled games for modern platforms? Or perhaps for digital distribution of Super Fighter Team's games?
BC: We'll support the mobile phones a bit, like Nokia's N series, as they're among the greatest such devices on the planet. Aside from that there isn't much of a "modern platform" plan. Our focus is on retro: producing new games for classic systems.

RA: Is there anything, anything at all, you'd like to add?
BC: Believe in yourself and in your abilities is the key to pushing through the clouds of doubt and turning your dreams into a reality. The only thing stopping you, is you.

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Words & scanned images by Neil Reive
original images © IPC Magazines

Following on from the previous stories, this fourth part of the story involves some major changes to the plot and the way the comic strip is written: Eagle readers themselves were given the chance to appear in the stories. The author at this time is unknown, although the artwork is recognisable as work by Mike Dorey, who remained as Artist throughout the story arc.

Upon returning to reality, following his epic win against the Dark Forces, Bobby tries to get his life back to normal. However, Bobby and his best friend Martin can't relax yet as the Warlord drags them both in to the computer's realm. A weakened Warlord explains to them that the evil of the Nightmare Zone are imprisoned inside an electronic cube, except for three who would not come peacefully. Gor, who Bobby faced in the second test, and his brothers Gru and Gurrt, are taken refuse in the game world of *Thunder Blade*. The Warlord states that he is too weak to pursue them, and asks that Bobby and Martin hunt them down. Bobby and Martin track down Gurrt in an enemy chopper and, with their combined skills, manage to trap the rogue without too much trouble. It's then off to the Gunship where Gru is hiding out, before tracking down Gor for a final showdown. With the successful capture of Gor, all the Dark Forces are now contained within the electronic containment cube. The Warlord thanks them for their help, but Bobby replies that this shouldn't happen again. The Warlord hopes that is the case and sends the two back to their reality.

When the Warlord becomes gravely ill, however, he brings Bobby back into the computer's realm for an ultimatum. The Warlord is dying and he tells Bobby to put on the Warlord robes and replace him when he dies. Bobby refuses and the Warlord passes away, leaving Bobby trapped inside the computer realm. His only escape is by putting on the robes of the Warlord and taking on the power of the title. An audible crack echoes through the Warlords chamber; it's the containment cube of the Dark Forces cracking. Feeling that he has no choice, Bobby puts on the robes

and helmet of the Warlord and the power that comes with it surges through him. He quickly rushes over to the containment cube, grabs it and crushes it into tiny fragments. It is over and Bobby wills himself back to his own reality.

Back in reality, Bobby reflects on his time in the computer realm and ponders whether he is being too hasty in abandoning the role of Warlord and the opportunity to realise the potential of playing games for real with no serious consequences. He makes the decision to continue as Warlord and let other players experience the computer realm. Besides, with the Nightmare Zone now non-existent, what harm is there? The players would return home safely whether they win or lose.

Andrew Porter of Prestwich, Manchester is chosen as the first Eagle reader to take part in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, taking on the role of Indy in search of rare artefacts. Warlord Bobby explains to Andrew that the game is to be played for fun only, with a winner's prize of a free copy of the game and a loser prize of taking home the experience of playing the game for real. Andrew progresses through levels one, two and three before winning the game quite comfortably. Warlord Bobby congratulates Andrew before sending him back home.

The next Eagle reader, Dave Dawson of Plymouth, is summoned by Warlord Bobby to take part in the Christmas festivities of *Slay Ride*. Dave takes on the role of Santa and needs to delivery presents to every house in Happytown, while fending off attacks from evil gnomes and goblins with only a water pistol to defend himself.

Before he can deliver his first present, Dave is shot down on top of a rooftop by a shotgun-wielding gnome. One of his three lives is gone already and it isn't too long before Dave loses a second. Following a further incident, the reindeers break loose from Dave's slay and he is sent pummelling towards the ground and loses his last life.

Bobby commiserates Dave and is ready to send him back home when two Dark Force creatures appear from nowhere claiming Dave for the Nightmare Zone. Bobby can't believe what is happening, but the Dark Forces explain that there

EXTENSIVE CAVE SYSTEM...
INDIANA JONES
ON LEVEL ONE YOU MUST SEEK AND FIND AN IMPORTANT ARTEFACT — THE CROSS OF CORONADO!
BEWARE YOUR ENEMIES — AND, MOST IMPORTANT, BEWARE THE DARK!

THE GAMES

Thunder Blade

Developer/Publisher: Sega
Platform: Arcade (with various ports)
Released: 1988

One of Sega's biggest arcade games of 1988 where you take control of the titular ThunderBlade chopper in a third person shoot-'em-up. Taking place in an unknown location, the plot revolves around the fall of the government and the rise of an evil dictatorship, who plan to take over the country.

Using ThunderBlade's guns and missiles, you need to take out the enemy's tanks, helicopters, battleships, etc. The missions take place over four levels, including war torn city landscapes, caverns, jungles, and aircrafts. The game was ported over to most home computers courtesy of US Gold.

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

Developer/Publisher: Lucasfilm Games
Platform: Mega Drive/Genesis, Amiga, Amstrad CPC, Atari ST, Commodore 64, DOS, Game Boy, Game Gear, MSX, NES, Sega Master System, ZX Spectrum
Released: 1989

There are various versions of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (two separate version on the NES alone), but the comic strip focused on the arcade adventure game from Lucasfilm Games. The game — involving action and puzzle sections — takes place over five levels, taking Indy to Utah caves, a circus train, venetian catacombs, Castle Brunwald in Austria, a Zeppelin and the quest for the Holy Grail itself.

The Sega versions received moderate success, critically and commercially. The various home computer conversions were handled by US Gold, also with varying success.

WARLORD BOBBY PATTERSON IS THERE TO INSTRUCT ROBERT...
PITS
THE FINAL STAGE TAKES YOU THROUGH DENVER, THEN ON TO THE FINISH LINE IN LOS ANGELES
ONCE AGAIN, YOU MUST CHOOSE EITHER MANUAL OR AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION!
BUT ONLY ONE OPTIONAL EXTRA OF HIGRIP TYRES IS AVAILABLE TO YOU NOW. IT REMAINS ONLY TO SEE WHETHER YOU HAVE CHOSEN CORRECTLY IN EARLIER STAGES.
SELECT TUNE UP PARTS
HIGRIP TIRE
SPECIAL TURBO

must be a natural balance to all things. As there is good, there must also be evil. Warlord Bobby may have defeated the Dark Forces and banished them to the far reaches of the electronic flux, but he can never destroy them totally. Warlord Bobby can't believe this and takes action against them using his power. However, as Warlord Bobby yields the two Dark Forces into submission, another creature appears unseen from Bobby and takes Dave away. As Bobby looks on in horror, the first two Dark Forces creatures also disappear. Bobby still can't take this in as he thought he had destroyed the containment field that held the Dark Forces imprisoned. He walks over to the shattered remains of the containment cube, picks up a fragment and sees the horrified face of Dave Dawson trapped within.

Feeling distraught that Dave Dawson is trapped in the Nightmare Zone, Bobby invokes a right to challenge the Dark Forces in a games playing contest. If Bobby's team wins five games, Dave Dawson is set free, but if his team loses five games then he himself will swap places with Dave. The Dark Forces can't believe he is offering himself to them and happily agree to the terms of the challenge.

The first game challenge is *Turbo Outrun* and Warlord Bobby summons Robert Cook of Upminster to take part in the game. Robert's task is to race across America, from New York to Los Angeles. From stage to stage, Robert gives a flawless race, choosing the correct transmission and optional extras throughout. He finally defeats the Dark Forces driver easily and game one goes to Warlord Bobby's team.

Leigh Woodall of Kings Lynn is summoned by Warlord Bobby to take part in the next challenge against the Dark Forces. The game chosen is *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* where Leigh plays as the brave Knight Sir Arthur as he attempts to rescue his bride-to-be from the King Demon. After a stuttering start, losing two lives, Leigh finally gets the hang of the game and succeeds in rescuing the maiden. Warlord Bobby congratulates Leigh and sends him safely back home. That's now two games won against the Dark Forces and Bobby wonders what will happen next…

To be continued…

Slay Ride (fictional)

Turbo Outrun

Developer: Sega-AM2
Publisher: Sega
Platform: Arcade (with various ports)
Released: 1989

Turbo OutRun was initially released in the arcades around 1989 by Sega and was quickly ported to many home computers and consoles by US Gold (with the C64 version getting the most praise). The original arcade cabinet sit-down version included the usual steering wheel, 2-gear shifter (Low/High) and 2 Pedals (accelerator and brake).

The player is tasked with driving a Ferrari F40 across the United States in 16 stages, from New York City to Los Angeles with various cities in between. As the title suggests, the game enables players to make use of limited turbo boosts throughout the races.

Ghouls 'n Ghosts

Developer: Capcom
Publisher: Capcom
Platform: Arcade (with various ports)
Released: 1988

Capcom's classic Arcade sequel to *Ghosts 'n Goblins* received many conversions to home computers and consoles. US Gold handled the home computer versions, while Sega, undoubtedly astonished everyone with their conversion to the Mega Drive/Genesis, which looked stunning and one of the console's early "must have games".

Similar to the first game, *Ghouls 'n Ghosts* features Knight Arthur, who must traverse through a number of platform stages, defeating all manner of deadly demonic creatures with his range of weaponry, in an attempt to rescue the souls stolen by the evil Loki, including that of his lover.

RETRO RESPECT

Words & screenshots by
CaptainD

DETAILS

Developer:	Binary Design
Publisher:	Mastertronic
Released:	1987
Platform:	ZX Spectrum (other ports available)
Genre:	Adventure

A rather well known game about different-shaped blocks falling down the screen was once described as "brilliantly simple, simply brilliant"—or something like that, anyway. That sentiment has rarely been demonstrated quite as well as Mastertronic's classic game *Feud*—a game that would seem to be ripe for a remake, yet somehow no-one's ever seemed to be able to do a good job of it. It was the first release on their "Bulldog" label and, while that was a worthy label for budget games, perhaps they peaked too soon—I don't remember any other game released by Bulldog reaching quite the level of popularity of *Feud*. Released way back in 1987, it's still a much-loved part of gaming history.

Coded by The Pickford Brothers (who were involved in the creation of a myriad games for the 8 and 16-bit computers and consoles), it was a game of elegant simplicity; you and your brother are wizards, have a bit of a feud going on, and try to kill each other. Oddly enough this was one of the games that my sister and I played repeatedly—apparently, controlling warring siblings is good for real-life family relations.

The game's characters are the two brothers, Learic and Leanoric, who never seem to think that it would be a good idea to just get along. You can play against the computer, but the real pleasure of *Feud* is playing against another human (or in the case of my sister, partly human).

This is done on a split-screen display so you can, if you were sneaky enough, spy on what your opponent was doing—of course, they can do the same to you.

On what seems quite a large game map you can find ingredients such as Feverfew, Burdock, Ragwort and Bog Weed (yes, Bog Weed)—some easy to get to, while others are far trickier. Each combination of two ingredients for a spell tends to require a lot of travel, and there can be other dangers besides your brother to be avoided. Naturally, the more powerful spells require more legwork and cunning to gather the necessary herbs—but the end result is definitely worth it!

You have a range of spells—twelve in fact—to aid you or clobber your hapless sibling: Teleport, Protect, Sprites, Zombie, Swift, Freeze, Doppleganger, Invisible, Reverse, Heal, Fireball and Lightning. Twelve might not seem like a great deal but there is a great deal of variety in

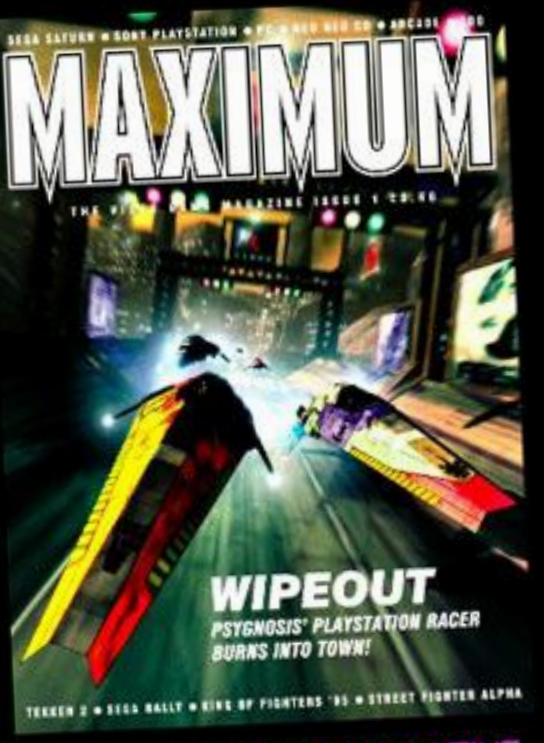
Coded by The Pickford Brothers (who were involved in the creation of a myriad games for the 8 and 16-bit computers and consoles), it was a game of elegant simplicity

how you could play the game, and a lot of scope for devious strategy; reversing your opponent's controls when they are in a dangerous area is always great fun, and watching fireballs and lightning strike the enemy never gets old.

The graphics are very good, bold and chunky to avoid the dreaded colour clash, and the sound effects are okay. This definitely isn't a game that aims to wow you with aesthetics though; the focus is on game play, which it has in bagfuls. Played in a flip-screen area (of course, back in

those days, scrolling game maps were virtually unheard of), the game simply consists of gathering herbs, bringing them back to your cauldron to create spells (once you had the right combination of ingredients), and using those spells to inflict the maximum effect against your brother.

Ported to various other systems, *Feud* for the ZX Spectrum alone managed an estimated 180,000 sales (an astonishing figure for a home computer in the late eighties). It remains a much-loved game and, in some ways, unequalled. Who would have thought that gardening (well, searching a garden to gather herbs to create spells to blast your brother into subatomic particles, which is almost the same thing) could be so much fun?!



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OUT-OF-PRINT ARCHIVE

Out-of-Print Archive is a magazine preservation project that restores classic videogaming magazines back to their former glory. We caught up with the co-founders of the project to discuss magazine preservation, scanning, editing and gaming...

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Tekken 2 (PSone) (p.20)
Kabuki Klash (Neo Geo) (p.31)
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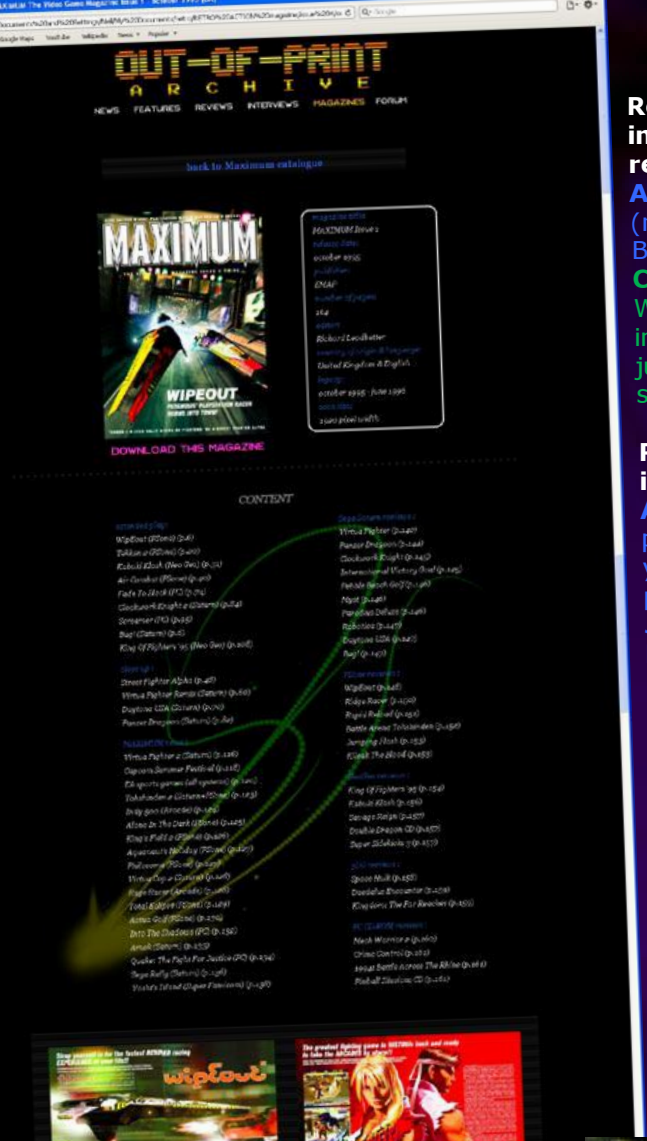


Retroaction: Can you please introduce yourselves to our readers?

Andy De Wilde: I'm Andy De Wilde (meppi), 33 years old and live in Belgium.

Carl Williams: My name is Carl Williams (triverse), I am 33 and living in the great state of Arkansas (we just got running water to most of the state so that makes it great, ya'll).

RA: Tell us how you initially got into magazine preservation?

ADW: I first got into magazine preservation about three to four years ago when I came across a partially scanned issue of the *Official Sega Saturn Magazine* online; I believe it was issue 32.

I thought to myself "man, I loved that magazine back in the day. Too bad I don't have more of these". That same week, I came across a couple of *Mean Machine* scans done by Mort, which were a revelation to me as I used to read the French *Joypad* magazine when *Mean Machines* was published in the UK. I then realized that one of my favourite magazines got its inspiration from *Mean Machines*, and so I became an instant fan.

Flash forward a couple of months and I had started scanning the four *OSSM* issues I had from back in the day, while also buying up missing issues on eBay with the plan to scan the full set.

CW: I came into magazine preservation several years ago after doing many searches for *Gamefan* issues on Google that I was missing (figuring eBay surely can't be the only source of this great magazine). I have many issues of this great magazine, among many others (and have been fortunate enough to be able to get in contact with many of the people responsible-to name one would be a disservice to the rest but you know who you are). The road to today has been rocky but adversity makes us who we are today.

Magazine preservation started for me at an early age, though not scanning. My father taught me from an early age to take care of my stuff but as time went on (and about 7,000 miles involving 13 moves over nine years or so) resulted in some damage to my magazines. Scanning them and preserving them digitally has quickly become a bit of second nature to me (and following meppi's lead, it is slowly becoming an art for me).

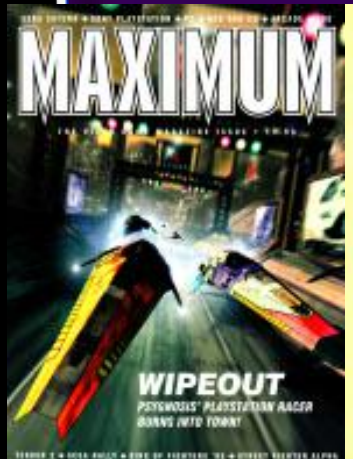
RA: Can you tell us what Out-of-Print Archive is all about and the reasons behind it?

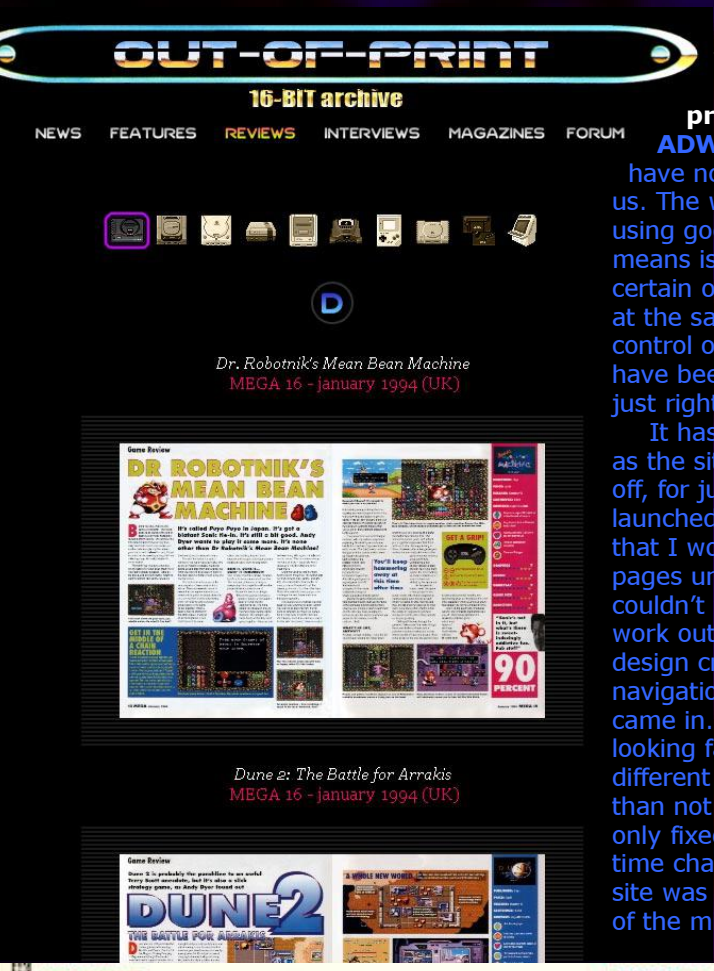
ADW: The most important reason for creating this site was to make sure that people would be able to enjoy these classic video game magazines for many years to come, since it can be extremely difficult to find them on auction sites, and even then, storage quickly becomes a problem. As does the volatile nature of magazines themselves.

The reason this site was created was due to the clashing of ideals as well as the incompatibility of the vision behind the site that we used to be part of. Sometimes you just need to break away to realize your own dreams.

CW: Yes, we officially opened the "doors" on September 9th, 2009. This is the same day that the Sega Dreamcast made its debut in North America and was very significant in the birth of Out-of-Print Archive itself. We have tried to turn adversity into something better for magazine preservation as a whole and think that with OoPA, we are succeeding in many ways (the stats don't lie, our readers like what they see). The whole site, from day one is set up to put focus squarely on the magazines, where it should be, not on the member releasing it (though they are important also).

RA: The OoPA website looks fantastic and is arguably the best preservation site design we have come across. Just how is the




OUT-OF-PRINT
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MEGA 16 - january 1994 (UK)
DR ROBOTNIK'S MEAN BEAN MACHINE
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Dune 2: The Battle for Arrakis
MEGA 16 - january 1994 (UK)
DUNE 2
THE BATTLE FOR ARRAKIS

website put together and has there been any problems along the way?

ADW: Thank you very much. You have no idea how much that means to us. The website has been created by using good old HTML coding. What this means is that it lacks the flash of certain other sites (pun intended), but at the same time it gives us more control over the little details, which we have been able to tweak until they felt just right.

It has certainly been a bumpy road as the site had been worked on, on and off, for just over a year before it launched. The way we started off was that I would just started coding the pages until I hit a brick wall and couldn't for the life of me find a way to work out the problems a particular design created, be it visually or of a navigational nature. That's where Carl came in. He took what was an average looking fan site, looked at it from a different perspective and more often than not came up with ideas, which not only fixed the problem, but at the same time changed the foundation of how the site was put together. It was a meeting of the minds. We kept what worked and threw everything else out. This process went on from the beginning up until the very last day before the site went live.

"we have heard criticism about the colour scheme, layout, or simply the fact that we used HTML and how archaic it is. To those naysayers, I must say, OoPA is so far, a resounding success"

CW: Thank you for the compliment there; it really does mean a lot to hear that people like the layout. OoPA came to be after many, many messages between meppi and myself trying to figure out the best way to make it "work" and the trials and errors that we encountered. It was a fun experience and one that would never come to fruition had meppi not been so dedicated to it.

Things took almost a year of planning and implementing various ideas to get OoPA to the point it is now. Sure, we have heard criticism about the colour scheme, layout, or simply the fact that we used HTML and how archaic it is. To those naysayers, I must say, OoPA is so far, a resounding success; we have readers spending two and a half plus hours reading content here. That sounds like we are a success to me.

RA: All right, own up, whose fantastic idea was it to have each magazine release accompanied by online preview content (reviews, interviews and features), and explain why it was thought of in the first place?

ADW: If I'm not mistaken, I think I'm to blame for that. At first we had the little previews at the bottom of each magazine, but those weren't linked to full size pages. They were basically the prettiest looking pages from the magazines, with lots of colourful artwork. Then we would have selected articles from each magazine put up in a database kind of way so that it would be easy to find certain interviews, reviews, etc. Yet again, Carl came up with the idea of having the thumbnails link up to actual online articles as well, which just goes to show one of those small changes that had a great impact for how the site works.

The idea to have online articles, which were readable to anyone at any time, came from thinking about how a simple thing as a magazine in CBZ form created hoops for people to jump through, if they wanted to read a certain article. So we wanted to tear down that wall and make it so that anyone with a basic internet connection would be able to enjoy the magazines, even the people using Dreamcast consoles to browse the web.

Naturally, due to the way bandwidth works on both ends, we had to scale down the size of the online scans considerably, as well as having to select which pages we feature as we simply can't put every single one online like this.

CW: The foundation was all Andy; he had things set up with beautiful artwork and design choices already laid out in his initial revealing so many months ago. I simply helped in pointing out things I felt needed changed to either make it easier to navigate or look nicer (having heard from *a lot* of members of other sites and their feelings about things also influenced some of the comments made).

The final design was the hardest to get created though; we were in that phase of adding more things trying to figure out how to make it even easier. We learned rather quickly that less is

more and went back to that philosophy and held back on adding features.

The preview pages that are selected are there as a showing of respect, that we are not simply putting magazines up as files for someone to download, burn to a DVD-R or archive in some other manner, and forget about. The previews are made available so that readers can get a taste of the magazine before downloading (when at a newsstand, most people will thumb through a magazine before making a purchase, not just look at the cover). The choice in articles is made to help spread the word about these magazines and to allow people to read some of the content before downloading a large file. If we could, we would post the complete contents up, but as Andy has mentioned, it would just be too much on bandwidth so we have to go with the best or most interesting articles in each issue.

RA: Quality edited magazine scans is quickly becoming OoPA's forte. Can you tell us exactly what is involved in getting a magazine release up on OoPA, from preparing it for scanning to finally releasing it live on the website?

ADW: Well people have their own preferred way of doing things, so I can only speak for myself here. There isn't much preparation done before the scanning itself, besides finding a better copy of certain magazines that are damaged beyond repair.

Most of the time, the scans themselves have to be done in separate parts, since quite a lot of magazines don't fit on a regular scanner plate. So once all the parts are scanned they are put together and checked for any inconsistencies between the sections. Once a page has been put together again, it is rotated to correct possible crookedness of the page. Then the page is cleaned up, digitally removing all the dust, dirt, creases and any other imperfections such as white pages turning yellowish over time or black pages fading to grey.

This can take anywhere from 3-45 minutes per page. Once the editing is done all the pages will be colour corrected so they match up to the original version as close as possible.

CW: As far as preparation, there isn't a lot to do other than get the magazine, pick your file format (before editing, many go with TIFF but remember, that file format gives you about a 30+ meg file PER PAGE), make sure you have the necessary hard drive space. One tip (something I wished I would have gotten sooner) is to use a "matt black" piece of construction paper (this will keep bleed through from seeping through and will help keep the page uniform on the scanner). After all of that, start scanning. I use a thick wedding magazine my fiancée has laying around (no matter which, there are usually more than one within reach) to lay on top of the magazine I am scanning (this helps keep "shadows" and blurriness from showing up in the scans).

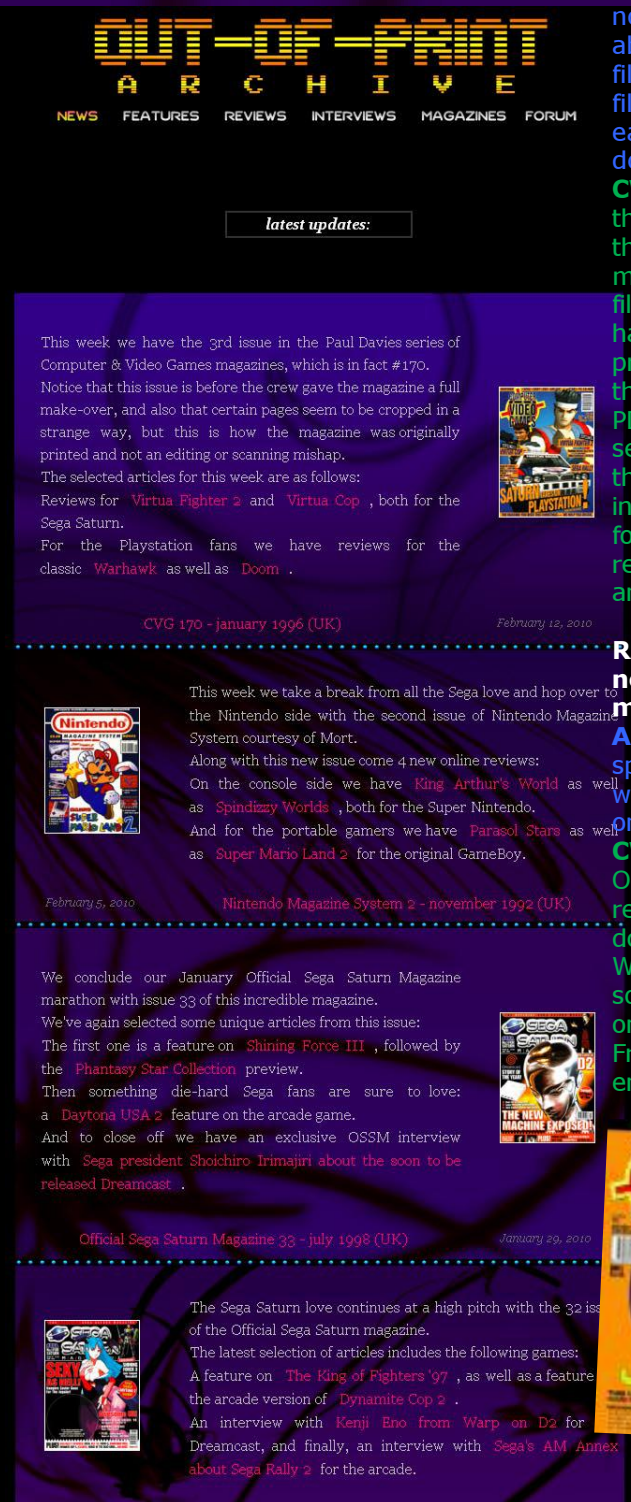
For editing the pages, I use GIMP 2.6, which allows me portability as I can keep the files on a memory stick and a copy of portable GIMP for various OS's and I am not tied to a computer or having to learn three different editing programs. The user interface of GIMP can be daunting at first but once you realize that you only use eight to ten of the available options, it becomes a lot easier. Saving at a quality setting of nine in GIMP works out great for quality and final file size, and that is what I use.

RA: The magazine releases come in CBR or CBZ format. So for users new to these formats, can you explain what they are, the software needed to view them and the reason for using it over other magazine compatible formats like PDF?

ADW: All our releases come in CBZ, which is basically a zip file of which the .zip extension is changed into .cbz so that specified programs can distinguish magazines from regular zip files. We pack the CBZ file up in another zip file so that the name won't get distorted by the upload server. So you only have to unpack the original zip file to get to the cbz.

To view the CBZ file, you can use Cdisplay or ComicRack on Windows and Comicbooklover on OS X. If for some reason you don't want to use these programs, you can always unpack the cbz file as you would a zip and view the original jpgs. The choice for CBZ is due to several reasons. CBZ readers are most of the time much lighter to use than a PDF viewer, which helps on older systems. Also PDFs are a bit more proprietary and

"The previews are made available so that readers can get a taste of the magazine before downloading (when at a newsstand, most people will thumb through a magazine before making a purchase, not just look at the cover)."


OUT-OF-PRINT
ARCHIVE
NEWS FEATURES REVIEWS INTERVIEWS MAGAZINES FORUM
latest updates:
This week we have the 3rd issue in the Paul Davies series of Computer & Video Games magazines, which is in fact #170.
Notice that this issue is before the crew gave the magazine a full make-over, and also that certain pages seem to be cropped in a strange way, but this is how the magazine was originally printed and not an editing or scanning mishap.
The selected articles for this week are as follows:
Reviews for Virtua Fighter 2 and Virtua Cop , both for the Sega Saturn.
For the Playstation fans we have reviews for the classic Warhawk as well as Doom .
CVG 170 - january 1996 (UK)
February 12, 2010
This week we take a break from all the Sega love and hop over to the Nintendo side with the second issue of Nintendo Magazine System courtesy of Mort.
Along with this new issue come 4 new online reviews:
On the console side we have King Arthur's World as well as Spindizzy Worlds , both for the Super Nintendo.
And for the portable gamers we have Parasol Stars as well as Super Mario Land 2 for the original GameBoy.
February 5, 2010
Nintendo Magazine System 2 - november 1992 (UK)
We conclude our January Official Sega Saturn Magazine marathon with issue 33 of this incredible magazine.
We've again selected some unique articles from this issue:
The first one is a feature on Shining Force III , followed by the Phantasy Star Collection preview.
Then something die-hard Sega fans are sure to love: a Daytona USA 2 feature on the arcade game.
And to close off we have an exclusive OSSM interview with Sega president Shoichiro Irimajiri about the soon to be released Dreamcast .
Official Sega Saturn Magazine 33 - july 1998 (UK)
January 29, 2010
The Sega Saturn love continues at a high pitch with the 32 iss of the Official Sega Saturn magazine.
The latest selection of articles includes the following games:
A feature on The King of Fighters '97 , as well as a feature the arcade version of Dynamite Cop 2 .
An interview with Kenji Eno from Warp on D2 for Dreamcast, and finally, an interview with Sega's AM Annex about Sega Rally 2 for the arcade.

not a format that everyone will be able to use, while CBZ is just a folder, filled with jpgs, compressed to a zip file and renamed. So anyone can easily get to the pictures even if they don't have the correct software.

CW: Andy has given several choices for the major operating systems and sure, this requires an additional download, much like PDFs would, but CBR/CBZ files are free and very simple to make (I have seen some free PDF creating programs and they were lacking to say the least). Some people mention that PDFs offer many additional features like searchable text and security in "locking" the PDF to keep people from taking out individual pages. While nice features, for the most part, people need to realize, we do not own these magazines and will not take such actions.

RA: How do visitors know when a new magazine release has been made available?

ADW: Whenever a new issue or a special feature goes live, a news post will appear on our news page as well as on the forum.

CW: When we first started here at OoPA, we had a haphazard schedule for releases—pretty much when one was done and ready to go, it was released. While this is fine, we decided to try something different: release new issues on Fridays. Fans can come here on Friday and find out what is available and enjoy it, either online, through the articles we post, or by download.

Having a specific day for releases accomplishes a couple of things. For one, fans don't have to constantly come here looking for the newest release only to be discouraged when there isn't one. Second, we eliminate unneeded posts and updates, like weekly updates (which is redundant and a waste of resources), this eliminates having to notify any sites wishing to check out our stuff since they can just stop by on Fridays and are up to date.

"We were blessed to receive permission from both Hugh Gollner and Roger Kean to release the back catalogue of magazines that they published through Maverick Magazines and Newsfield Publications respectively"

RA: How are the magazine release downloads offered to users? Are there any limits to what visitors can download?

CW: We use file hosting services online to host the files, rather than having them on our own servers. This eliminates the biggest cost in running a site like this: bandwidth. We are a 100% open community, so you can come to www.outofprintarchive.com and download magazines and never have to type in your e-mail address or anything of a personal nature.

ADW: We chose to use Hotfile to distribute our scans, since, at this time, they offer one of the most user friendly systems. There are no limits to what anyone can download, besides the 30 minute waiting period between files, which is Hotfile's own limit.

CW: We don't use torrents here and have no plans to do so. This is because of comments made by many copyright owners we have been in contact with that feel adversely towards torrents. We are working to make Out-of-Print a legal magazine preservation archive on the Internet and are working very closely with the owners of many of these magazines. We have nothing but respect for everyone involved and we heed their advice, listen to their comments and appreciate their hard work and dedication. That is why we have many of the rules in place that we have.

RA: You mentioned working with the publishers there and OoPA have already secured permission from some publishers to release their back catalogue. Can you explain why gaining that permision from the publishers is an important factor for OoPA?

ADW: Yes, indeed. We were blessed to receive permission from both Hugh

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STAGE 1 BEGINNER BOSS KONG
"PRETTY BOLD ARGEY BUT I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU MYSELF!!"
MEDIUM STAGE 2: UNDERGROUND WEAPON STORAGE
STAGE 2 MEDIUM BOSS KING
"SO YOU MADE IT THIS FAR, EH? NO MORE!"

Gollner and Roger Kean to release the complete back catalogue of the magazines that they published through Maverick Magazines and Newsfield Publications respectively [publications such as *Mega Drive Advanced Gaming*, *PC Player*, *Zzap!64*, *Crash* and more – ed.]. The reason why we think it's important to involve the original publishers in our attempt to preserve their past work is because we feel it's the right thing to do.

When it comes down to it, they are the ones who have the right to decide how their work gets treated. To exclude them from this process would do a disservice to everyone who originally worked on these magazines. If they feel that we can do it in a way that is satisfactory to them and in a way that preserves not only the raw content, but also the feel and standards of the original version, then we know that we've done our job.

Naturally, it's not always easy to get permission straight away or even get into direct contact with publishers, as there are so many variables. Many of them are also hesitant at first to work with people who claim to do something like this without wanting something in return.

In the end, the only way to show them who we are is to stay true to our word and continue on the way that we set out when creating this site.

RA: With permission to release various magazines, do you have any juicy releases/news for the future that you can share with our readers? Further permission from other publishers, perhaps?

ADW: Well, work is certainly proceeding on getting more issues released from both Newsfield Publications as well as Maverick Magazines. It just takes a bit of time to get them looking just right in digital from. As for permission from other publishers, we certainly are in talks with one and are pursuing others as well, but I'm not sure if it's the right time to disclose any further details.

One thing I can say is that if everything goes through, it will be a big change for us. And the way that this particular publisher's work will be preserved might be a bit different than what you've seen from us in the past.

CW: Everything will be revealed on the OoPA news page and in the forums. Other than this, I can't comment at this time.

RA: Can anyone contribute to OoPA? If so, what can they do to help out?

ADW: Absolutely! We do reserve the right to review scans to make sure that they are of a certain quality before they get released. We also don't accept monetary donations of any kind. We have no interest in gaining anything from the work we do, besides the feeling that we helped in preserving a piece of gaming history. The one thing we do accept for donation is magazines, which will be scanned and put up on the site.

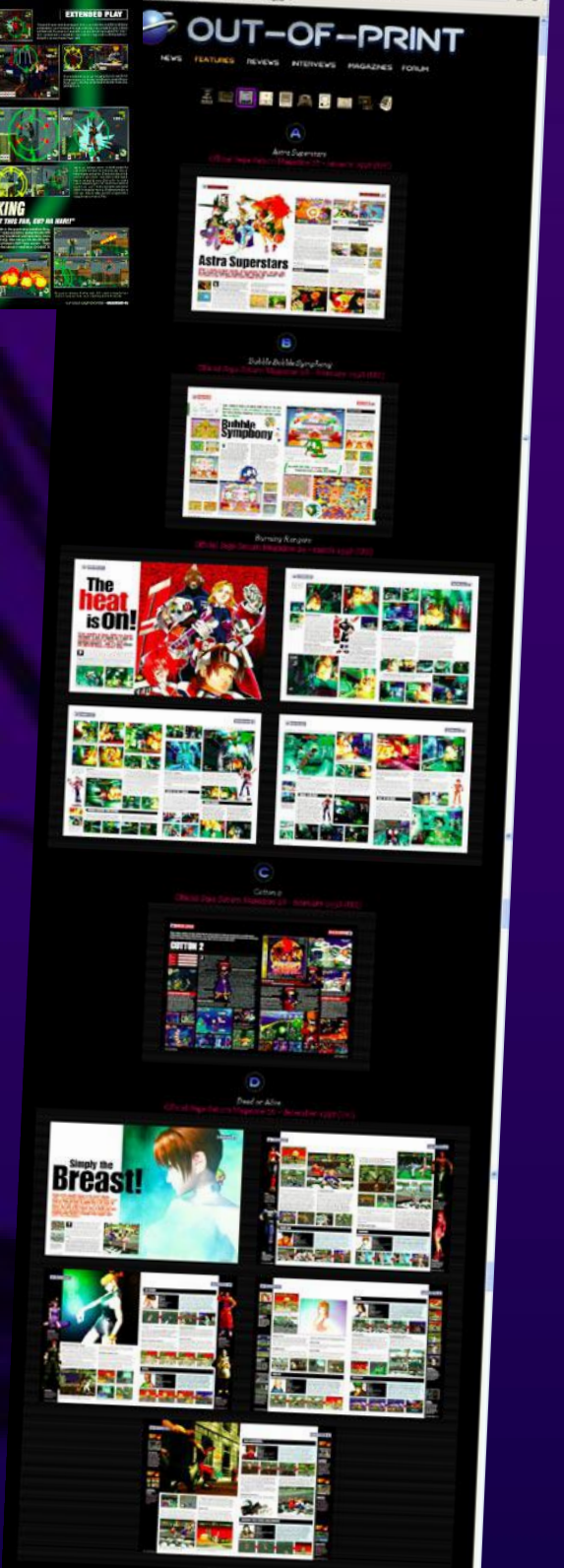
CW: Yes, we are more than happy to accept magazine donations from members (as of this writing, we are working with many members to bring releases out that would otherwise probably never be released). We enjoy hearing from members that enjoy the magazines, though, so if you have time, come into the forums and introduce yourself (though, remember, this is not a requirement).

As Andy mentioned, we do try and maintain a certain level of releases here at OoPA. We do what we can to work with the person wishing to help out as much as possible so that their releases are as great as they can be.

RA: If a new user did want to help scan old magazines, what settings should be used (quality, DPI, dimension, etc.)?

ADW: A JPG quality of "nine" in Photoshop is preferred; other programs sometimes use different settings. So I'd say a size of 1.5 to 2.5 MB for a JPG file with a width of 1920 [pixels]. PDI at 300 always. As for dimensions, the absolute limit is a page width of 1280, but these are mostly exceptions. We prefer to have at least 1440, or better yet 1600 or 1920.

CW: This is a good question. As far as scanning, it is best to use 300 DPI (you may have to play with the settings in your software to find this setting but most scanners are default at 150 DPI). Some



contributors I have worked with over the years have done 600 DPI, which is fine—just make sure you are prepared for the size of the files you will be creating. Some people who have scanned stuff, that I have edited, save in BMP or even TIFF (while TIFF is basically a RAW image file, it also creates a scan that is about 30mb per page).

The width depends on the original file in question, we try to release magazines in 1920, which makes for a beautiful release with very little artifacting that you will see in lower resolutions. 1280 is about the minimum width that will yield a nice looking release. If you are scanning at 300 DPI, resizing to 1920 will be no problem and make for some great quality releases.

If anyone has any questions, we are more than happy to help if we can.

RA: How old do the magazines have to be? I imagine there are rules concerning the uploading of recent publications?

ADW: Absolutely! New magazines will under no circumstances be scanned, unless the publisher gives us written official permission to do so. We draw the line at the millennium. So anything starting with the year 2000 isn't eligible to be scanned, unless it's one of the few Dreamcast specific publications, which ran from 1999 up till 2002. Due to how the system perished so suddenly—and might I add, way before it's time—we treat these Dreamcast only publications as an anomaly as well, which I hope people will understand.

CW: Unless it is a Dreamcast specific magazine, or an official release that we have been given permission to release, our December 1999 cut-off date still stands. Keeping with our current cut-off date is out of respect for current publishers, or copyright holders, that may be offering back order services (some work with distributors, others do it in house). This was a choice led by many points of advice from various sources and is held by us here at OoPA. Steps are being taken to get permission from publishers to release newer magazines and the fans of OoPA will be the first to know when this happens.

RA: Which OoPA magazine scan release are you most proud of and why?

ADW: My personal favourite one has to be the *MAXIMUM* set. Not only is it a totally brilliant magazine in every way, but I received the issues I was missing from none other than Richard Leadbetter [former editor of *MAXIMUM*, *Official Sega Saturn Magazine*, *Mean Machines*, and more – ed.] himself who donated his personal issues to me so I could scan them and help preserve them. For that alone, I am eternally grateful to him.

The second one would certainly be *CVG*168 [*Computer & Video Games* - ed], which starts off the Paul Davies era of *CVG*. This magazine, along with hundreds of others, was donated by a different Richard from Holland.

CW: The most recent one is my answer here. It is an easy out of sorts but it is true. We put so much work into the site, the releases and just all around making things the way they are that we have to be selective in what we release (believe me, if we could, we would be releasing more every week). All of the releases we are fortunate enough to post are special and deserve their time in the limelight.

RA: Mort, arguably the pioneer of classic magazine scanning, has donated some *Nintendo Magazine System* scans to OoPA. Can you tell us a little bit more about this partnership and whether we can expect to see further scans from Mort (or other scanners) at OoPA?

CW: We are proud to have friends like Mort that are willing to help with the project like he has. It is an amazing show of love for magazine

"I received the issues [of Maximum that] I was missing from none other than Richard Leadbetter himself who donated his personal issues to me so I could scan them and help preserve them."

"Keeping with our current cut-off date [December 1999] is out of respect for current publishers, or copyright holders,"

preservation that Mort has shown in his generosity, not only to OoPA but to other magazine preservation sites (such as World of Spectrum and surely many others that are specially focused).

Mort has definitely helped motivate *a lot* of people to do some form of magazine preservation; I have nothing but respect for his amazing amount of work. We are definitely going to be releasing more of Mort's scans and will do whatever we can to work with him and anyone else wishing to donate magazines in the future. I have done a lot of research on magazine preservation, met many great people through that work and made a few friends in the process and I look forward to continuing for years to come. Just drop us a message and let's talk.

Who knows, our next special might be Mort himself and how he got started.

ADW: Yes, indeed. As I already mentioned, it was Mort's work that got me started in the first place. So seeing him donate several sets of his work was a very, very nice surprise to say the least. There will certainly be more scans from Mort as well as other scanners coming in the following months.

RA: What is your favourite classic videogaming magazine and, while we're on the subject of favourites, videogame of all time?

CW: This is not an easy question to answer. I have several that I really like. The top has to go to *Gamefan* though; I find myself re-reading them several times a year (having over 60 issues makes it easy to not read the same issue more than once a week or two). I can't forget *EGM* and *Gamepro;* those magazines were what got me into gaming magazines in the first place (though my father used to subscribe to *Electronic Games* in the 80s and I would sit in his lap as he would talk to me about the various games being reviewed). As I got older, I discovered *Video Games and Computer Entertainment* and the general writing style was more mature, less flash or attempts at being the first to release information, but rather focusing on giving a very level headed view on whatever game was being covered (the trade show coverage rocked in *VG&CE*). I have been fortunate enough to meet, online, most of the core staff that worked on *VG&CE* and they have all been as cool as I imagined them years ago.

Favourite videogame of all time? Well, that has to go to *Robo Warrior*. I love that game. I have been playing it off and on for years (since the first day I saw it at the local Payless-in northern California, Payless is more than a shoe store, they are more like K-Mart). Great game, a little monotonous but still fun and scary (when you are down to about two minutes of health left, no bombs and a screen full of obstructions at about three hours into it, tell me your heart doesn't start racing and beads of sweat start forming on your forehead). Don't knock it till you play it and truly understand it for what it is.

ADW: *Retro Gamer* without a doubt. But seriously, I know what you mean. That's indeed not an easy question to answer. Back in the day I bought tons of magazines each month and the ones I loved most were *EGM*, *Joypad* (French), *CVG* and *OSSM*. While *EGM* game me more of a glimpse into the future since I live in Europe and worldwide releases were something that only existed in our dreams at the time, still I would have to pick *CVG* as my favourite. I only got *OSSM* four issues before it was discontinued so I can't count that one.

I connected to *CVG* in a big way during the Paul Davies years as the editor. Reading about how the crew fell in love with the Sega Saturn and its incredible library made me decide to give Sega another chance at the time where I was starting to get jaded by all the junk coming out for the PSone and the lack of releases for the N64. Ed Lomas in particular was someone who's opinion I trusted 100%. After getting my own Saturn that respect only grew.

My favourite game of all time is a question which is a lot easier to answer: *NiGHTS into Dreams*.

RA: Thank you for taking the time to speak with us. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

ADW: Thank you for the interesting questions, it's been fun talking about all this and it brought back some fun memories for me. One thing I would like to add is if you enjoy video game magazines, please support the publishers and people who work on them. The last couple of years have been very hard on the industry and it doesn't seem to be getting better anytime soon. So if you'd like to enjoy video game magazines for many years to come—just like you can with the ones from past decades—please actively support the industry.

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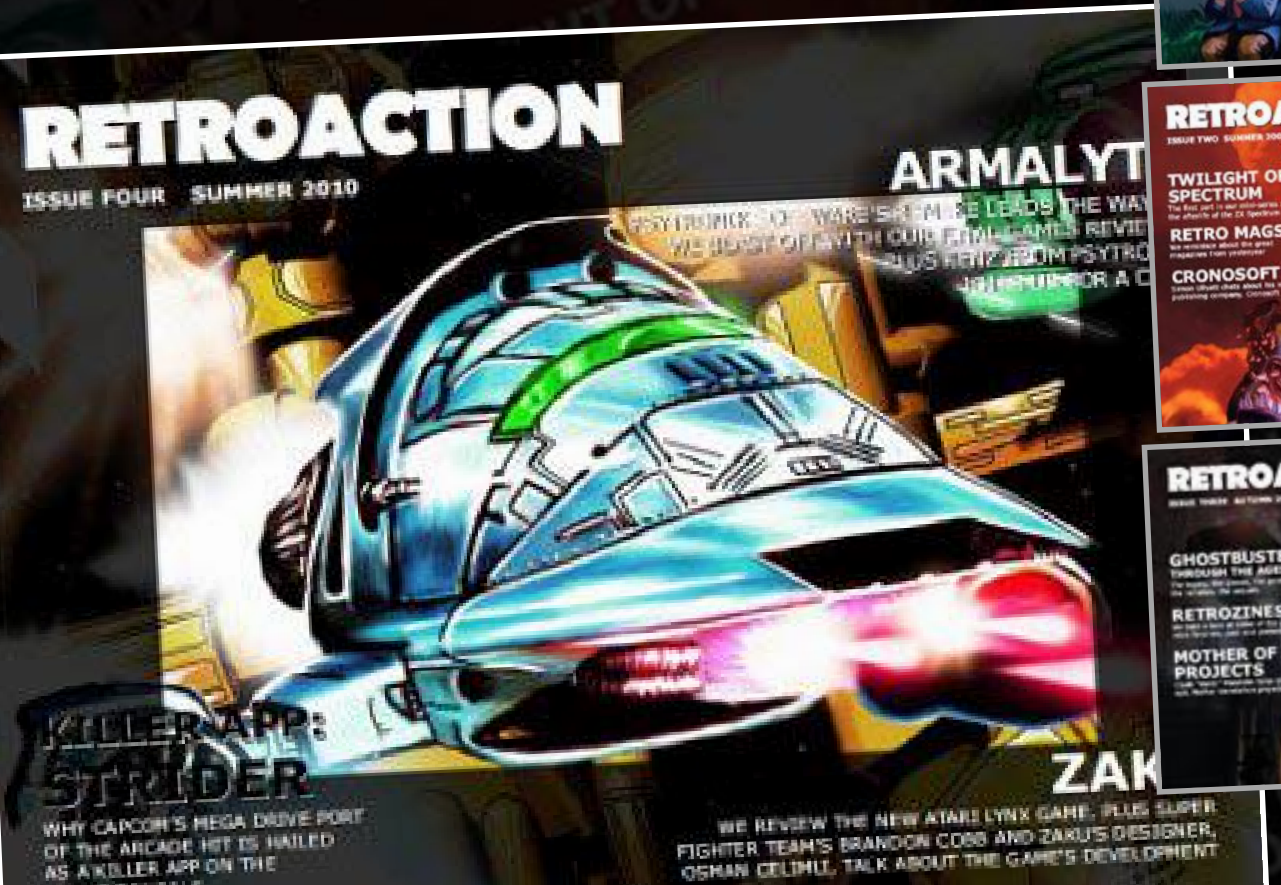
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- ...Lost Arcades: *X-Men: Children of the Atom*
- Retro Respect: *Buck Rogers: CtD*
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Lotek64 is a quarterly German retrogaming magazine, which comes in both print and digital PDF form. The publication contains news, articles and reviews on all things retro—although the C64 does feature prominently. Both print and PDF editions can be found at the Lotek64 website.
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The **Racketboy podcast** features interviews and soundtracks from the world of Retrogaming. The website is also host to some fine articles, in-depth guides, a lively forum and more.
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Weblink: http://ca-fan.pl/

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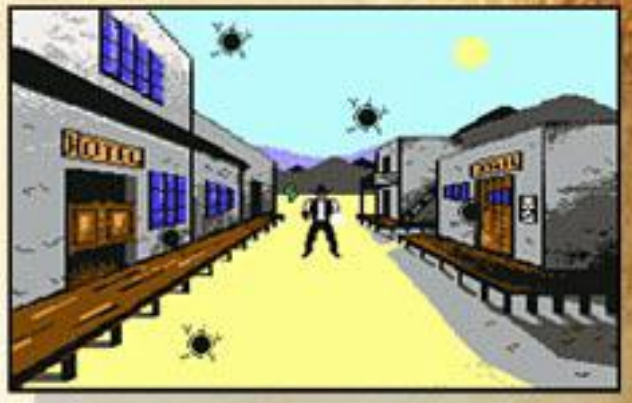

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